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THE EXODIAD,

A POEM.

BY THE AUTHORS OF CALVARY

AND

RICHARD THE FIRST.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY J. WRIGHT, ST. JOHN'S SQUARE,

FOR LACKINGTON, ALLEN, AND CO.

FINSBURY-SQUARE.

1807.

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THE EXODIAD.

BOOK THE FIRST.

OF Israel, by Jehovah's mighty power
From long captivity redeem'd, with loss
And total overthrow of Egypt's host,
What time the chosen servant of the Lord
From Goshen to the land of promise led
Through the divided sea the ransom'd tribes,
Sing, heavenly Muse, and prop those mortal powers,
Which but for thy sustaining aid must sink
Under the weight of argument so vast,
Scenes so majestic, subject so sublime.

Now to the desart from the Red Sea shore
Th' emancipated armies of the Lord,
Safe from pursuit, had pass'd; there stopp'd and turn'd,
And lo! what late was land had now become
A trackless waste of waters, whelming down
With hideous roar into the boiling gulph.
There as they stood in contemplation rapt
Of the tremendous scene, whilst every wave,
That surg'd upon the beach, aloud proclaim'd
The witnest miracle, their conscious hearts
Now gave the praise to God; for all had pass'd
Through the disparted sea, to them a wall,
To harden'd Pharaoh an impending pile
Of cataracts, in whose profound abyss
He and his thousands were for ever sunk,
Save what the indignant billows toss'd on shore
From wreck of chariots, spears and glittering arms;
Memorials of that pomp and proud array,
Wherein of late confiding they aspir'd
To snatch a victory in despight of Heav'n,

And those portentous signs so oft display'd
Of an approaching vengeance, now complete.
While thus the rescu'd multitude was spread
From the sea-margin to the sandy plain
Of Etham, where the wilderness began,
Moses, who saw that order now would gain
A prompt obedience, straightway gave the word,
That on the signal every tribe should form
Under its special chieftain, and present
To the four points a regulated front.
Whereat the trumpet sounded forth the charge
For preparation: instant in his post
Each cited leader stood, and, whilst his eye
Observant rang'd along the far-stretcht line,
Marshall'd the shapely phalanx. Nahshon here,
Chief of the sons of Judah, led the van,
And rear'd his glittering standard in the east.
Next in succession Issachar's bold tribe
In varied arms were seen, and them beside
Eliab, chief of Zebulun, dispos'd

His harness'd warriors in well-order'd files.
Resplendent floated in the mid-day sun
Reuben's rich banner, by the hand unfurl'd
Of sage Elizur; Simeon's tribe, to them
Adjunct, nor less with martial zeal inspir'd,
Led by Shelumiel stood: these with the sons
Of Gad, who own'd Eliasaph's command,
The southern front compos'd.—Upon the west,
Arm'd at all points, Elishama display'd
The strength of Ephraim; loud was heard his voice,
High in command, for all the warrior's fire,
Ambition and the ardent love of fame
Glow'd in his generous breast; there too was seen
Gamaliel; him, for eloquence renown'd,
And wise and brave, Manasseh's tribe obey'd;
Abidan last, of Benjamin the chief,
Form'd on the left, and clos'd the western front.—
Fac'd to the north Ahiezer unfurl'd
Dan's warlike ensign; he, with Asher's band,
O'er whom presided Pagiel, and the force

Of Naphtali, entrusted to the charge
Of brave Ahira, squar'd the mighty host
Of chosen warriors at all points entire.
This done, the minister elect of God,
With Aaron, elder of the sacred tribe,
And Joshua, then in Nature's youthful prime,
Approach'd and stood at gaze. The distant sound
Of timbrels, swelling with the breeze, announc'd
The choral train of Miriam. Silent stood
The host four-fronted, covering all the plain,
More than six hundred thousand men at arms.
When now as Moses from his station view'd
The army of Jehovah thus drawn out,
And heard their numbers, the consoling thought
That these were yet selected from a world,
Sunk in idolatry, to serve their God
With holy worship, and confess his name,
Fill'd his meek heart with joy; to Heav'n he rais'd
His eyes with tears of thankfulness suffus'd,
And as his soul fresh inspiration felt,

Thus in unstudied phrase his rapture flow'd.
" To God, ye sons of Israel, to the Lord
Of Heav'n all-gracious, let your choral hymn
Ascend, triumphant in his glorious name.
In Him we live; his mercy is our stay,
His strength is our salvation. O'er the east
When day's bright herald spreads his rising beams,
Let early hallelujahs hail the morn;
And when in his meridian throne he sits
Incumbent o'er th' unshadow'd earth, and sheds
Intolerable brightness, not to him,
But to th' Almighty Power, who with a word
Can quench his flaming orb, direct your praise.
At morning-break, at noon sing to the Lord;
At evening-fall to Him, who gives you rest,
Lift up your hearts; for He alone is God,
The God of battles. In the sea he cast
The horse and his proud rider; all are lost,
Beneath the closing billows sunk in death,
The deep abyss o'ershadows them, the caves

Of ocean hide them. Thy right hand, O Lord,
Arm'd with omnipotence, hath overthrown
The impious legions, which provok'd thy wrath,
Unaw'd by wonders in their sight display'd.
Ye sons of Jacob, heard ye not the foe
With loud voice vaunting his superior might?
I will pursue, he cried, I will o'ertake;
I will divide the spoil; on Israel's tribes
I will discharge my fury. Where is now
This conqu'ror, this despoiler? Down at once,
Down rush'd the heav'n-arrested flood, and swept
In thund'ring torrents him and all his host.
Where is the boaster now? The eddying waves
Boom o'er his sinking head, whilst in the spray
The flitting sea-fowl dips her wings, and screams
Exulting in the storm: but we the whilst,
God of our fathers! we, who in thy strength
Confide and are thy people, we, who know
It was thy hand that led us through the sea,
Can view this wreck of nature undismay'd,

And nothing doubting still pursue our march
Over this savage wild, rocks pil'd on rocks,
Where vegetation never yet had life.
Ye men of Israel, God is our defence;
Under the covering of his cloud we came,
Under his providence we will advance.
Though all the barbarous hordes of Esau's race
League to oppose us, victory must be ours;
For who shall stand before the Lord, whose wrath
Is a consuming fire? Methinks I see
The plains of Palestine bestrew'd with slain,
The tents of Edom shake, the mighty chiefs
Of Moab crouch for fear, and all the kings
Of Canaan, all her idols and their groves
Bow to the dust, wither and melt away,
If but the breath of God's displeasure smites
Their death-devoted armies: ye, the sons
Of promise, faithful if ye still abide
The hour, that ends your trial and your toil,
Shall find that happy land, where Nature's stores,

Oil, milk and honey, as in rivers flow,
And in the city of your God repose."
He ceas'd, when instantly th' approving shout
Of thousands rent the air; through all the host,
Along each front, the pealing thunder roll'd.
The joyous plaudits, that at once bespake
Their faith and their obedience, cheer'd the heart
Of the meek prophet; for he rightly gave
Not to himself, but to his God, the praise;
Therefore thrice welcome to his ear their zeal,
Vouch'd with this loud acclaim. And now, behold!
Miriam, of sacred minstrels the supreme.
Eager she came to hymn the praise of God
For his deliverance vouchsaf'd, her soul
Full of the glorious theme. Aloft she rear'd
Her well-brac'd cymbal; at the sight whereof
The hum of voices and the clash of spears
Ceas'd, and the whole assembled army stood,
As if spell-stricken, motionless as death.
High-rais'd above the choir, with out-spread hand

Prepar'd to strike, the mighty mistress stood:
When as the loud prelusive note was heard,
(Signal to all her train, that now began
The sacred harmony) forth burst at once
Their swelling voices, tunable, but loud
As thunder, rolling o'er the desart plain
To the horizon, where the distant rocks
Echo'd Jehovah's name; nor was the dance,
(Then holy deem'd, now sensual and impure)
Idle the whilst, but still with measur'd step
Accordant to the strain, the graceful band
Of damsels mov'd along the army's front:
There onward as they pass'd from tribe to tribe,
Loud was the shout, and glittering-bright the flash
Of spears and swords high-waving, till at length
The distant sounds, no more distinctly heard,
At intervals arose, then died away,
And deep impressive silence reign'd around.
So when the night's dominion mild prevails,
Some watchful shepherd, as he tends his flock

On the broad summit of the grassy downs,
That overhang the ocean, far beneath
Surveys the ebbing tide, and marks the waves,
As silver'd by the moon's pale beam they roll
Upon the pebbly shore; each, as it heaves,
In due succession tow'rds the deep retires,
Breaking with lessen'd force upon the beach,
Till, as they tend to their remoter bound,
Their murm'rings scarcely strike his list'ningear;
He, wrapt in pensiveness and thought profound,
Feels o'er his soul a solemn awe transfus'd.
Now to the station, where the white-rob'd seer
Conspicuous stood, the anxious chieftains throng'd,
If haply they might learn from him, who spake
The dictates of Jehovah, whither next
To point their destin'd march. Before them lay
A hideous and interminable wild,
How far unlike to those luxuriant plains,
O'er which the Nile majestically pours
His fertilizing flood. There, when he ebbs,

Propitious harvests crown the liberal year;
The luscious grape hangs clust'ring from the vine,
And flocks and herds unnumber'd graze his banks:
There all was plenty, here on every side
Gaunt Famine star'd; bare in the scorching sun
Parcht Nature panted; no luxuriant grove
Spread out its hospitable shade, no dew,
No fount irriguous through the channel'd soil
Offer'd one drop to slake the burning thirst
Of the spent traveller; to th' utmost verge
Of the horizon, far as eye could reach,
All seem'd one level sheet of parching sand,
Save where at intervals the eddying winds
Had pil'd it into hills, pregnant with death,
When the next sweeping blast might tear them up
In suffocating clouds: here might be seen
The solitary ostrich, pilgrim-like,
Pacing the dreary waste, her nest bequeath'd,
Erratic bird, to the life-giving sun:
Here if the spilth of blood from man or beast

Tainted the air, the vulture hovering high
Fann'd her resounding wings, and with loud scream
Call'd her rapacious brood to share the feast:
In every blast the voice of death was heard;
The gaunt wolf's howl, the shrill hyæna's cry,
And savage growlings of the hungry pard.
These, and worse scenes of terror and dismay,
Which sick'ning fancy drew whilst Israel's chiefs
Ponder'd the miseries of their destin'd march,
Palsied their nerves with fear; the joyous shouts,
That had arous'd their courage, now had ceas'd
And died upon the ear; Heav'n had withdrawn
The cloud bifronted; happy had it been,
If still that cloud might cover from their view
The terrors, that enclos'd them. In their front
The pathless wilderness; behind them roll'd
A threat'ning gulph, forbidding all retreat,
Once pass'd, but never to be tempted more.
Where should they turn for comfort? Here they saw
Of age and infancy a helpless throng;

Son, husband, father, all the strongest ties
Tugg'd at their hearts: faith could not stand the shock.
Whilst Moses prophecied and Miriam sung
Songs of deliverance, the general shout
Dispers'd those thoughts, that now when silence reign'd
In deeper gloom revisited their minds.
Doubts and perplexities, the stronger grown
Because awhile forgotten, now resum'd
Their influence, intermitted, but not lost.
This Moses saw, and much was griev'd to find
From evidence too clear how fast their minds
Were veering to despair, for though like them
No confidence he plac'd in human means,
Yet not like them despair'd he of divine.
On faith's firm rock his constancy was built;
To him the gloomy wilderness appear'd
A theatre, whose horrors would set off
With more magnificence the bright display
Of future miracles. Before his tent,
Full in the view of the assembled throng,

Whose murmurs drew him forth, the prophet stood.
Sad was his visage, and his clouded brow
Augur'd a mind disturb'd. Around he cast
A look, that sunk into the hearts of some,
Till now the foremost leaders of revolt;
But aw'd to silence, conscious and abash'd,
Unable to abide his piercing eye,
They slunk into the crowd. Awhile he paus'd,
Prepar'd to hear and answer their appeal;
But all were husht, no bold declaimer yet
Was found to broach complaint. At length with hand
Uprais'd to claim attention, thus in tone
Of sharp reproof, becoming his high trust
As legate of Omnipotence, he spake.
" Ye priests and elders, great is your offence,
And deeply have ye sinn'd against the Lord,
When thus ye stir his people to revolt.
Are ye the teachers, the selected tribe,
The consecrated guardians of our faith,
Masters in Israel? Wherefore come ye here

With these deluded men to bay my ears
With your complainings? Either now declare
What are your doubts, or say what stronger proofs
Your consciences require than ye have seen,
Too lately seen to be so soon dismiss'd
From your weak wavering minds. Why do ye keep
Your eyes for ever dwelling on the scene
Of that bare wilderness? Turn them behind,
And view that sea, miraculously pass'd,
Where thousands upon thousands are engulph'd,
And unembalm'd the corpse of Pharaoh lies,
His grave the sand, his monument the waves.
If God made dry the waters for your sakes,
What terrors in that desartdo ye see,
What obstacles too difficult, too vast
For His Omnipotence? Did ye come forth
By stealth from Egypt, or did God vouchsafe
His visible effulgence to direct
And light you on your way? Were ye not slaves?
Are ye not free? If there your eyes beheld

A land of plenty, was that plenty yours?
No, 'twas an aggravation, that enhanc'd
Your sorrows, and more bitter made the tears,
With which ye wetted the coarse food, dealt out
By your hard task-masters in scanty doles.
What strange oblivion hath benumb'd your hearts?
Did ye not then, when misery press'd you down,
When every sense was agoniz'd, and scorn
And insult sharpen'd your oppressor's stroke,
Did ye not then—? Yes, then ye cried to God,
Then, when ye needed, ye confess'd his power,
And sue'd for his salvation. He redeem'd
He brought you forth; the God of mercy saw
The affliction of his people. Think ye then,
That He, whose goodness rescu'd you, will now
Leave you to perish in this barren wild?
No, where the lion finds his prey, the Lord,
Who feeds his creatures, will provide for you.
Beyond the desart lies the promis'd land.
Will Nature's God, who throws this trackless waste

Betwixt your hope and you, erect a mound
To bar his purpose and affront his power?
Persist, and ye succeed. Dismiss your fears:
These trials are ordain'd to prove your faith;
By faith ye conquer, conqu'ring ye obtain
All that your souls can covet or desire.
Ye serve the living God. If nature fail,
And famine threaten, He, who made the worlds,
Is your provider. What do ye discern
In that dry wilderness, whereon ye look,
Of aspect so terrific, which to attempt
Appals your courage and confounds your faith?"
He said, nor added more, for now he saw
The purpose of his argument attain'd,
And other wish in his meek heart was none
But to convince and save. To Heav'n he rais'd
An interceding look, and twice he pass'd
His hand across his brow, as if to show,
Should any trace of anger there be left,
He will'd it to be gone. Beside him stood

Joshua, of leaders militant the chief,
And ever as the prophet spake, his eye,
Quick glancing on the recreant elders, mark'd
The sympathetic fervour of his soul.
And now, when Moses, as he clos'd his charge,
Had call'd upon the armies to advance,
The hero's zeal burst forth, and loud he cried—
" Comrades, and soldiers of the living God,
Can ye hear this, and doubt?" If more to add
Were in his mind, the animating cry
Of the assembled warriors, with one voice
Vouching their firm allegiance to the Lord,
Made fruitless the attempt, nor, as it seem'd,
Was there occasion left for further speech
To urge their duty, or dispel their fears.
Still there was one so fatally possest
With envy, rage, and disappointed pride,
'Twere easier to persuade the famisht wolf
To lick the hand, that robb'd him of his meal,
Than turn to kindness his unfeeling heart.

Korah was he, a dark, obdurate man.
Nor recollection of that self command,
Which sacerdotal dignity should hold
In public councils, nor the conscious sense
Of time and opportunity unfit,
Checkt his audacious tongue. In front he stood
From forth the line levitical advanc'd,
A rude ill-favour'd orator; no grace
Of action, utterance or external form,
Nothing had he from nature to engage;
Shrill was his accent, and his cheek was ting'd
With hectic spots of acrimonious red,
Prognostics of the fever in his mind.
Such Korah was, and thus, when all was husht,
With preface self-approving he began.
" That I, not less than these, who seem prepar'd
T' applaud whatever desperation prompts,
And rush upon destruction with a shout,
Dare with unshaken constancy abide
These counsels, which pronounce upon the host

The sentence of inevitable death,
None, knowing me, will doubt. Who, that with me
Have shar'd our common sufferings, but will own
That I have stood unmov'd, whilst they have writh'd
Under affliction's scourge? Heav'n can attest
Oppression never could extort from me
The gratifying tribute of a groan.
When others wept and fruitlessly implor'd
Forbearance, I on my tormentors smil'd,
Scoff'd at their threats, and gave them curse for curse.
I speak not this in vaunting, but in truth;
It is my nature—so is Korah made.
Had there been others temper'd of like stuff,
We had not thus to tyrants giv'n our strength,
Till Slavery's fetters rusted on our limbs.
And mark this truth—for what has truth to fear?
We had not tamely crouch'd to the control
Of one, who, flying from the common lot
Of his poor countrymen to Midian's land,
There dwelt, enjoying all that sweet repose,

Of which we never tasted—Nay, but hear—!
'Tis true I speak of Moses, and I see
You relish not the plainness of my speech;
What then? I draw my being from a source
As patriarchal and as pure as his.
But if your minds are levell'd to your lot,
Enjoy your slavery, and let mé be free.
Yet 'twould be wise, methinks, and worth some pause,
To weigh the comforts, which his care provides
To balance this surrender of your hearts.
Scan them, compute them; they are all in view,
A vast amount—of comforts did I say?
No; of privations an unbounded store,
The whole fraternity of human plagues;
Famine, or drought, or pestilence, or sword,
These and a thousand avenues besides,
All leading to dishonorable graves,
Are open to your choice, and our great chief,
All-gracious, leaves you free on which to fix.
In Egypt, though opprest, we yet had food;

The breast, that fed the suckling, was not dried
For lack of water: though our master's hand
Bore hard upon us, yet from other ills
With interested care he kept us free:
As much of rest, as serv'd us to renew
Our daily toil, he gave us, and at night
Shelter'd our health from the inclement air.
What now is our condition? Hunger, thirst,
Want, apprehension, nakedness, despair,
These, like the serpents by the magic rod
Of Moses conjur'd up, attend our march;
And he, who turn'd the waters into blood,
Shall next incarnadine these desart sands,
Whilst dogs and vultures hunt us on the track.
But I have done; for me it nought avails,
Whether I here abide a few short days,
Or whether, dragging on my toil-spent limbs,
I seek some other melancholy spot,
Whereon exhausted I may sink and die."
He ended; when elastic as the bow,

By the strong archer drawn, and all as swift
As his launch'd arrow, instantly behold!
Joshua rush'd forth; so sudden was the flash
In the sun-beam reflected from his spear
And lion-crested helm, so bold his mien,
So dazzling bright his beauty, 'twas to sight
As God had sent an armed angel down
To light amongst them, and strike dumb the wretch,
Who dar'd blaspheme his name: in burnisht mail
Tow'ring he stood, and from beneath the arch
Of his dark brow so fiery was the glance
Of his fierce eye, so terrible his frown,
Korah affrighted shrunk—" 'Tis well," he cried,
And grasping shook his threat'ning spear the whilst,
" 'Tis well thou'st sav'd thyself in time, and spar'd
My hand the shame of spilling blood like thine.
Live, and be scorn'd! This weapon is reserv'd
For worthier uses. Oh inglorious man,
Alien from truth and born for Israel's shame!
But that thine impious arrogant discourse

Proves that there is a man so grossly blind
In understanding and in heart so hard,
I would not have believ'd it. Strange it were,
Had this defamer of the Lord been found
A wretch forlorn, outcast of all the tribes,
A moon-struck driv'ller; but it mocks belief,
That one, upon whose hoary head we see
The reverend stamp of age, should thus arraign
The mercies of his God, and unappall'd
Vaunt his bold blasphemies. And is it thou,
Degenerate scion from the honour'd stock
Of Izhar and of Kohath, righteous men,
Is it thou, Korah, from whose lips we hear
Words, that would draw an instant judgment down,
If Moses, meekest of the sons of men,
In mercy stay'd not the vindictive stroke?
Atone, or thou art lost! Back to thy tent!
Begone, we heed thee not, and neither wish
To hear thy blasphemy, nor see thy doom."
He said, when Korah speechless turn'd aside,

Like that arch-enemy in after times
Foil'd in the wilderness, and sought his tent
With downcast look, confounded and abash'd;
For now in every threat'ning face he saw
The storm of indignation, only check'd
By presence of their Heav'n-commission'd seer,
And knew his time to fly—" Begone!" they cried,
As with one voice, " and hope not to implant
Thy treacherous suspicions in our hearts—"
He heard, but answer'd not. Moses the whilst,
Whom Aaron now had join'd, prepar'd to speak.
O'er his unruffled brow his silvery locks
With grace majestic flow'd, and as his eye
In pious rapture glanc'd the circle round,
A smile of mild benevolence bespoke
The patient calm composure of his soul,
And thus at length he made his meek appeal.
" If I, who of myself possess no state,
That Korah need to envy, have provok'd
This accusation by a vain display

Of honours rashly sought, or proudly worn,
Judge me, ye men of Israel! What am I,
But a poor mortal, whom the Pow'r, that lays
The yoke of this authority upon me,
Ordains to bear it? How have I deserv'd
This angry reprehension from a friend?
Such I accounted Korah; near in blood,
I held him near in heart. The sharp reproof,
Dealt him by Joshua, did it spring from me,
Or was it prompted by that generous zeal,
That marks him out for future glories born?
It was his own brave spirit urg'd him on
To vindicate the mercies of his God.
Silent I stood the whilst, and blush'd for him,
Who blush'd not for himself: his hoary hairs
Mov'd my weak heart to pity. Time hath been,
And griev'd I am to think that time is past,
When Korah's faith was loyal to his God.
Wherefore this sad reverse? If what I am
I am by God's decree, and what I speak

I speak not of myself, but as inspir'd
By Him, whóse voice I am, let Korah know,
If he provoke rebellion in our tents,
The cause is God's; nor Joshua, nor I,
But the Avenger will be God Himself.
If Korah envy me, he envies cares,
And sleepless nights and agitated days
And mental terrors, more than heart of man,
Unless by Heav'n supported, could endure.
If he must envy, let his envy point
At that serenity, that calm content,
Which, in the bosom of domestic bliss,
In Jethro's peaceful mansion I enjoy'd.
I panted not for pow'r. God doth not choose
The great ones of this world, but from the mean
And lowly takes his ministers, to shew
His wonders, and confound the pride of man.
So was I sent to set the ransom'd free
And lead his Israel forth, as servant should.
When did I ever say—So Moses wills?

Who ever heard me give commandment forth
But in the name of God? There are, who know
How God was pleas'd to manifest his will
By my weak ministry, and they can say
If or ambition mov'd me, or the hope
Of vain supremacy.—I pause to hear
If any can convict me of untruth."
Him answer'd Aaron thus—"Tis not enough
That none of all here present will renew
The railing accusation they have heard.
Whilst aught remains untold, which it imports
Thee, Moses, to declare and them to know.
For who can tell how many they may be,
That have imbib'd the slander Korah broach'd,
And think with him, though they conceal their thoughts?
Therefore what apter time or stronger cause,
Than now conspire, can urge thee to unfold
The wond'rous revelation seen and heard
Of thee in Horeb, which at once explains
Thine else mysterious mission, and confirms

Thy title to be trusted and obey'd
As our deliverer, chosen of the Lord
To work those miracles, that Egypt rues,
And which, though all have witness'd, some dispute?
Behold, on all the reverend elders round
Attention sits, and, resting on their spears,
The chiefs and captains silently await
The awful promulgation of those truths,
Which shall for ever fix their faith, and prove
Thyself the servant, them the care of Heaven."
He said, nor did the pious seer refuse
With his strong-urg'd injunction to comply;
And thus in simple unaffected phrase,
(The modest cloathing truth prefers to wear)
With dignified composure he began.
" Ye know when holy Jacob and his sons,
Our great forefathers, from their ancient seat
Of Hebron to the land of Egypt came,
Where Joseph, whom they sold, had favour found,
And rul'd the realm in wisdom, they obtain'd

An heritage in Goshen, where their flocks
Found ample pasture, and, as years roll'd on,
Their numbers multiplied, their wealth increas'd,
And all was peace and happiness around.
There full of years in his descendants' arms
The patriarch Jacob died, with his last breath
Repeating God's assurance, that from him
A mighty multitude should spring, to whom
The fruitful land of Canaan was decreed.
There, in his couch uprais'd, the dying seer
Dealt his prophetic blessings to his sons,
And ere the pulses of his heart had stopp'd,
Straitly conjur'd them to inter his bones
With Abraham and with Isaac in the cave
Of Machpelah in Canaan. They, as bound,
His strict command obey'd: Egypt embalm'd,
But Canaan keeps his body; there it rests,
In pledge of the assurance giv'n by God,
That we, like that, from Egypt should come forth,
As at this day, to claim the promis'd land,

And where the father lies the sons should live.
When Joseph died, and Israel's staff was broke,
Egypt with jealous policy beheld,
Not, as in Jacob's day, a simple horde
Of shepherds, but a mighty people now
Lodg'd in the very bosom of her realm:
Suspicious and alarm'd, she straight devis'd
Works of enormous magnitude and toil,
To crush your spirit and exhaust your strength.
Ye know how I was rear'd: I shar'd not then
Your bondage; I was free; yet, when I saw
The oppression of my countrymen, I seiz'd
The vile Egyptian in the very act,
And struck him dead to earth: the daring deed
Was nois'd; my life was forfeit, and I fled:
Jethro receiv'd me; at my suit bestow'd
His daughter; I, who other home had none,
Paid him due service, and I kept his flock.
Thus far at least your memories are with me,
And all that I have told to all is known.

Now mark the rest, and, whilst I speak of things
Mysterious, such as never yet to eye
Or ear of mortal man have been divulg'd,
Put faith into your hearts, and list to one,
Who knows the peril, should he wrong the truth.
As o'er the desart to the hindmost tract
I led my flock, to Horeb's mount I came.
Silent was all around me; far as sight
Could stretch, a solitude profound appear'd.
I felt as if, abstracted from the world,
I were cut off from commerce with mankind;
A solemn horror o'er my senses crept.
I would have pray'd, but as my soul aspir'd
To give devotion vent, methought I felt
A sudden impulse seize on all my powers,
Compelling me in silence to await
The revelation of some awful scène.
I gaz'd upon the mount, whose craggy sides
With trees and tangling bushes were entwin'd;
When lo! at once I saw its lofty peak,

So bright but now, involv'd in sable clouds,
Majestically rolling to its base,
Thro' which blue lightnings flash'd and thund'rings burst.
Meantime, the desart in a furious blast
Caught up, and driv'n in whirling eddies on,
Seem'd as the elements of earth and air
Conspiring rose to mingle in the wreck
Of universal nature; yet secure
That not for me, an atom in the scale
Of God's creation, this great stir was made,
Silent I stood, pondering the awful scene.
I felt no terror; but as still my eyes
Were fix'd upon the mount, which now appear'd
To tremble from its base, as if inspir'd
By feelings new and undefinable,
My swelling heart with warm devotion glow'd.
When lo! direct in view a flaming bush
With sudden splendor blaz'd; the curling fire
Now shot on high, now spread on every hand,
Whilst in the midst entire the bush remain'd.

Kneeling and mute the prodigy I view'd,
When from the centre of the flaming mass
I heard a voice, that call'd me twice by name;
Obedient I replied; again the voice
Broke on my ear—'Approach not nigh, it cried,
Put off thy shoes, for holy is the ground,
On which thou standest; I, thy father's God,
Now present speak to thee'—To earth I bow'd,
And hid my face, to look on God afraid;
When thus the Lord—'Be sure that I have seen
Th' affliction of my people, and am come
To bring them forth from bondage, to a land
With milk and honey flowing: thou art he,
Whom I will send to Pharaoh to conduct
From out of Egypt my redeemed host'—
I, prostrate still, with fault'ring voice replied,
'Almighty Lord, of what account am I,
That I to Pharaoh's presence should repair,
And do this wond'rous thing—?' Again the Lord—
'I will be with thee, and upon this mount

Me shall ye worship, when I've brought you out'—
These gracious words my confidence renew'd,
And thus I ventur'd to enquire of God—
'Lord, when to Israel's children I shall come,
And shall announce these tidings, should they ask
Who is my sender, how shall I reply—?'
Again from out the fire I heard a voice
Distinct and awful—'Say, Jehovah sends thee,
That is my name, and in that name go forth,
And with the elders say to Egypt's king,
We are the servants of the living God,
And He hath met us. Grant us now to go
A journey of three days into the desart,
That we may sacrifice unto the Lord'—
What need of more? I see before me those,
Who join'd the suit, and witness'd the repulse.
The miracles, that follow'd, all have seen;
In them I had no part. God gave the word,
Reveal'd his will, and arm'd my hand with power.
Where is my boasting then? When He commands,

Who made the worlds, obedience is no praise.
Now, I conjure you, ponder in your hearts
What ye have heard. Nothing to me is due,
For I am nothing worth, but to the Lord,
The master whom I serve, to Him, who acts
And speaks in me, your whole devotion pay."
He ceas'd, when deep revolving in their hearts
The wond'rous revelation thus promulg'd
With promise of deliverance, by the voice
Of God Himself from out the fire avouch'd,
Awe-struck the congregated princes stood.
No Korah there was present; all were husht,
Nor heed had they of witness to attest
Their prophet's high authority: the sea,
Between whose walled waters, by his rod
Divided, they had pass'd, still roll'd in sight,
And every wreck of Egypt's shatter'd host,
That the disgorging billows cast on shore,
Proclaim'd at once his triumph and his truth.
Whereat with shouts, that made the air resound,

Burst forth their hymns of praise; aloft they rais'd
Tow'rds Heav'n their hands, as if with one consent
Their vows of endless duty they renew'd;
And now as to the minister of God
For their redemption they had bent the knee,
Had he not check'd their purpose, and disclaiming
That glory, which to God alone belong'd,
Will'd them to give their praise where praise was due.
  Now to his inmost tent retir'd, alone,
In curtain'd privacy with folded arms
And head low-drooping o'er his aged breast,
By rage, revenge and disappointment rackt,
Korah desponding sate. The cherisht dream,
That painted thousands leaguing in his cause,
Had fled, and left his desolated heart
Bare to the fangs of envy, which, bereft
Of hope, that only could have stay'd its rage,
More and more ravening and insatiate grew.
Still floated in his sight the hateful scene,
Where Moses circled by the elders stood;

For memory still to every passion lends
Her plastic tablets, and no tints are deep
As those, which Envy's pallet can supply.
Still in his ears the acrimonious taunts
Of Joshua sounded, galling as the shout
To the chaf'd panther, when, the hunter's spear
Fixt in his side, he gnashes with the pain,
And flying cow'rs into his lonesome den:
So fled the Levite, stricken to the heart,
Abasht, discomfited; sighs deep and loud
Burst from his lab'ring breast, hot tears bedew'd
His rugged cheeks, but words none found their way,
For none that language own'd could speak his pain.
  Meantime behold! returning from the host,
His colleagues Dathan and Abiram came;
Hearts to his purpose fitted each possess'd,
But with more covert policy and guile
His malice each conceal'd—Abiram most.
Ent'ring his tent they heard his frantic groans,
And found him on the ground with desp'rate hands

Clench'd as in act to strip his hoary hairs.
Awhile they stood, and scann'd him with a look,
That augur'd less of pity than contempt;
Then, raising him from earth, thus Dathan spake.
" What means this wild excess? Art thou the man,
Who lately with such confidence proclaim'd
His calm endurance of adversity?
If with such causeless agonies you sink
Under slight trials, how will you abide
The inauspicious tidings that we bear
Of worse reverses, how be arm'd to meet
With steady resolution well-advis'd
Your pow'rful rival, who, if not oppos'd,
High o'er our heads by the applauding breath
Of myriads blown, will scoff at our attempts?"
With troubled aspect Korah thus replied.
" Dathan, what nature made me that I am,
And, spite of your reproaches, such shall be.
I do not boast that self-controlling art,
By which the soul's strong impulses are mask'd,

Whilst underneath an hypocritic smile
Hatred deep-rankling in the bosom lurks.
For me, more honest though perchance less wise,
When seen I'm known, when heard am understood.
Others may hold their passions in reserve,
And, like the embers on the peasant's hearth,
Cover and keep alive the stifled spark,
That glows unseen, till fit occasion serves
To give its energies unbounded scope.
The fire, that kindles in my heart, must flame;
And, if no other fuel it can find,
On me its parent let its fury seize,
And revel in the heart, that gives it birth.
Away, 'tis vain, 'tis profitless to waste
This tame appeal to patience upon me.
I see my foe invested with command,
I witness how the multitude confirm
His proud dominion; their applause of him,
Their markt abhorrence and contempt of me,
Still clamour in mine ears; and dost thou talk

Of temperate counsels and procedure cool?"
This said, on Dathan as he turn'd his eyes,
He met a glance of such severe reproof,
With indignation and contempt so charg'd,
As struck him to the heart. "Pardon, he cried;
I know thee, Dathan, for a plain blunt man,
Who will not spare the weakness of a friend,
And little careful how to chuse the times,
When to enforce advice and when withhold;
But here is one hath studied that nice art,
Of thee neglected. Let Abiram speak."
"Why should I speak, Abiram strait replied,
To him, who will not hear, but wastes that time
In weak lamentings, which, if well employ'd
In prudent counsels, might ensure revenge?"
"Say'st thou revenge? impetuous Korah cried;
Its very sound to my distemper'd soul
Is consolation, harmony and health.
Give me that healing hope, and I am calm."
To whom Abiram—"Prince, of that sage tribe,

Whose counsels all revere, must you be told
Unless our plans by forethought are matur'd,
Vigour is lost and expectation mockt?
It is the eye that gives the javelin aim,
Without whose mark it does but beat the air;
So will it be with us, if in our course
Discretion does not go before and guide.
But what can your experience learn of me,
Who am no son of Levi, nor of kin,
As you, to Moses, who beneath the show
Of meek demeanour bears that proud control,
And boasts that high legation, which to shake,
If such be Korah's purpose, well he knows
Success was never gain'd by vain complaints,
Or empty menaces, that harm not him,
'Gainst whom they're vented, and betray themselves?
But you are calm—and well it is, for now
Much it behoves us to compute the strength
Of him, whose ruin we would work, of him,
Who vaunts himself the legate of Jehovah,

And by that title keeps our souls in thrall
And bondage worse than what our limbs endur'd
Under the yoke of Pharaoh. We, your friends,
Dathan and I were present and have heard
This mighty orator proclaim aloud
His great commission held of God Himself:
Nay more, he told us, and unblushing told,
That in the desart, when near Horeb's mount
He watch'd the flock of Jethro, God appear'd
In fire, and commun'd with him from the bush,
That in the midst of flames was unconsum'd.
Here is a prodigy, to him alone
Reveal'd, which almost deifies the teller,
Of none else seen and by none else affirm'd.
If this were true, it makes him friend of God;
On this he founds his mission, and appeals
To miracles in Pharaoh's presence wrought,
Which, seen by thousands, thousands will attest.
Believe me, son of Izrah, 'twere no task
Of easy function to instil suspicion

Into the people's hearts, and shake their faith
In him, who led them dry-shod through the sea."
" Why then do you persist, with eager speech
Korah exclaim'd, why labour to adduce
Fresh reasons for despair? I have enough,
More than enough, and spurn that mean advice,
Which counsels patience whilst it stifles hope."
" Not so, rejoin'd Abiram, nothing mov'd
By Korah's idle wrath, that pass'd him by
As would the babbling of a shallow stream,
Not so, nor for such purpose am I come;
But in fair friendship zealous to devote
Such humble faculties as I can boast
To you and to your cause. Full well I know
How prone to superstition are our tribes,
And if on that foundation Moses builds,
He builds on sandy ground his tott'ring power;
Nor less assur'd am I that they, who yield
Their easy faith to legends without proof,
And lend their ears to fables, that arrest

Their passions by surprise, will all as soon
Veer to the next deceiver, and renounce
For reasons light what lightly they believ'd.
You are a son of Levi, and derive
In like gradation of descent with Moses
From Him, to whom the promises were giv'n.
Where are they, you will ask—If they were giv'n
To Abraham and his seed, why not to me
Descends as full a portion of his blessing
As of his blood? Why am I put aside,
And why is Moses chosen? These are points
For dealers in the Cabbala to solve;
I am not quite prepar'd to contravene
Traditions long believ'd and holy deem'd,
Therefore I wave my answer: this I know,
There is no fixt allegiance in the hearts
Of these back-sliding people to their priest.
Put back the curtains of your tent, and mark
What dismal prospect opens from the east:
There famine, drought and desolation reign,

There stalks the pestilence, and in the blast,
Red with embowel'd fires, Death's arrows fly.
Thither we march, there lies the promis'd land,
But interposing death 'twixt us and it
Cancels the promise. Now let Israel's host
Pursue their march one day, but one short day,
Across that sandy furnace, and ere night
Mark if you do not find them on their knees
To Egypt's idols: hunger will rebel,
And men will laud the Gods, who guard a land,
Where Peace resides, and Plenty spreads her stores:
So will it be with us; in days foregone
So was it with our fathers: Jacob's sons,
Hard pinch'd with want, came begging to the doors
Of Pharaoh, who for pity took them in,
And little did their consciences revolt
From food his priests had bless'd, and from abundance,
His gods had granted, and their God withheld.
Yes, strange it is, if Egypt's stocks and stones
Are, as we say, no gods, that Nature's Lord,

Whom we adore and serve, should against us
The chosen seed shut up the womb of earth,
And open all her richest stores to them,
Who render Him no praise, nor own his name.
They were our task-masters, and we their slaves;
They worship brutish idols, we the Lord
Of the whole world and all that it contains.
Mark how our God distributes good and ill
'Twixt us his followers and them, who kneel
To deities irrational and dumb:
They on the fruitful banks of Nile repose,
We to the howling wilderness are driv'n;
They from the image of a horned calf
Extort satiety, whilst, by our God
Consign'd to thirst and hunger, we are left
To starve on promises—I pause for words."
" And well thou may'st, blaspheming Dathan cried,
For where can words be found to picture forth
The horrors of our doom, lur'd as we are
From fields of plenty into wastes of sand?

Where is the man—I had almost said the god—
Will find resources for to-morrow's wants?
Our flocks, our wives, our children and ourselves
Without a miracle must die by thirst.
Where is the pool—the river I should say—
For source less copious hardly can appease
This countless multitude? Yet Moses cries,
Go forth; be stout! The Lord will lead you on.
To this I answer, will the Lord give water?
Behold, I faint; how then can I go forth?
Thousands around me faint and die for thirst;
Will the Lord lead them on to rilling streams,
Or can they drink the promise of your words,
And quench the mortal fever that consumes them?
When we have kill'd our flocks my heart revolts
From the tremendous question that occurs
What next imperious hunger may demand.
If day by day the prophet's power can work
Successive miracles to feed the host,
And strike out water where no water is,

The host will drink and eat till miracles,
By frequency grown common, lose their name.
If he, who bade the Red Sea stand on heaps,
Can stay the rolling of the sandy waste,
When the enrag'd tornado tears it up,
Our sight will fare the better; if his rod
Can shade the flaming sun, and call the breeze
From the cool chambers of the distant north,
Moses will be our king, that rod his sceptre,
And we his slaves; but if he slack his hand,
If the sun burn us, and the south wind smite,
Mark my prophetic words—he'll hear a murmur,
And that same murmur, swelling as it rolls,
Which, if we are not lost to sense, it shall,
Will be his death's knell: therefore wait the issue;
Watch, and arrest occasion—I have said."
And now, their venom spent, the traitorous pair
Were rising to depart, when Korah thus
With interposing speech bespoke their stay.
"Sons of Eliab, of the princely tribe

Of first-born Reuben chiefs, well have you said,
And, thus advis'd, I am content to wait,
Till time and opportunity mature
The patient means, that may ensure revenge.
What I have said in wrath I rashly said,
For 'tis the property of wrath to take
No counsel of the judgment—Let it pass.
Strange and mysterious are the things you tell
Of this presumptuous man, who boldly vaunts
Familiar converse with our Israel's God.
Ambition nature gave him, Egypt art,
Falshood is all his own. Heav'n guard my faith
From such unvouch'd assertions! Sure I am
His whole life is a fable from the time,
When launch'd and floating on his ozier raft,
A wailing infant, he was drawn to land
By Pharaoh's daughter, and thence Moses call'd:
Nor did she only name him, but adopt
And train him as her son—Oh father Nile,
What secrets hast thou witness'd in thy course!

Who but can spy a preconçerted plot,
Where Jochebed but play'd the mother's part,
To screen the frailty of the Memphian dame?
Take him, Osiris! He is all thine own.
Cradled in artifice, and early school'd
In all the mystery of Egyptian lore,
Behold a man made perfect in deceit!
Trace him through all the mazes of his craft,
And who can doubt, meek-seeming as he is,
What mighty projects of ambition breed
And bourgeon in his heart? When Pharaoh died—
Now mark his policy—protection fail'd,
And Israel groan'd in bondage; he, who lov'd
Nor toil nor slavery, fled to Midian's land,
And providently deem'd it easier task
To tend the flock of Jethro, than to share
The stripes and pains and drudgery we endur'd:
Peaceful were all his days, his nights secure,
Ours was the labour, his was the repose,
If in his bosom, whom ambition haunts,

Peace and repose can harbour; for ev'n there,
Where all was solitude, and other cares,
Save for his flock in charge, Moses had none,
Strange voices, issuing from the midst of flames,
On Horeb feign'd or fancied to be heard,
Warn'd him to Egypt: on this plea he came,
Vaunting his high commission from that power,
Whose sacred name, so treating, he profanes:
If this to doubt be sin, whilst yet it rests
Upon his sole averment, of all men
I am most guilty. Could I lend my faith
To feats of sorcery, why should I withhold it
From Jannes and from Jambres, Pharaoh's seers,
More than from Moses? They proceed by spells,
And turn the charmed waters into blood;
The same he does, but takes a bolder tone,
And arrogates a fellowship with God;
And now behold! exalted into power,
He, who self-exil'd fled to Midian's land,
A conscious homicide, at once becomes

Priest, legate, lawgiver, a mighty prince:
Heav'n be my witness, whilst my reason holds,
The son of Izhar never shall debase
His free-born spirit to receive the law
From Jethro's shepherd; no, my gallant friends,
So resolute am I to brave his power,
That though the firm earth, smitten with his rod,
Yawn'd to the centre, on the dreadful brink
Dauntless I'd stand, and from across the gulph
Hurl my defiance"—More he would have said,
When now the signal for immediate march
Burst on his ear: uprose the dark divan;
Still glow'd the fiery spot on Korah's cheek,
And vaunting thus he cried—"Auspicious hopes
Mount to my heart, that I have heard the knell
Of our oppressor's power, when now he bids
That braying trumpet publish to the host
His desperate resolution to pursue
Their hopeless march across these thirsty wilds.
Go forth, ye sons of Reuben; in the front

Of your brave warriors, first-born as ye are,
Your high hereditary post assume.
Mark well the son of Peleth; he is mine;
Associate to my cause—In him confide."
He said; forth issuing from the tent they past,
And to their several stations, deep in thought,
Pondering their dark devices, took their way

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

BOOK THE SECOND.

ARGUMENT.

THE Tribes commence their march—Arrive at the Waters of Marah—Miracle wrought there—The Tribes continue their march—Miraculous supply of manna—The Tribes advance to Alus—They are met by a party of the Amalekites under Omār—Conference between him and Joshua—He repairs to Amalek at Rephidim, who, on his report, determines on war, and makes a solemn sacrifice to Chemos—Joshua convokes a council—Confers with Caleb and with Moses—The Tribes advance to Rephidim—Engagement between the Israelites and Amalekites—Defeat and death of Amalek.

THE EXODIAD.

BOOK THE SECOND.

NOW in the van, where Nahshon led the strength
Of Judah, with the associate tribes colleagu'd
Of Issachar and Zebulun, was seen
The lion standard waving high in air,
Signal of march commenc'd: Reuben the whilst
With Gad and Simeon on the southern front
Stood in well-order'd files, till on the word
The clarion sounded; instantly unfurl'd
Forth flew the banner, whose sky-tinctur'd field
A human head display'd, emblem of power

And primogenial right: upon the west,
Where Ephraim and Manasseh, favour'd tribes,
With Benjamin their martial-column form'd
In measur'd step, accordant to the stroke
Of the far-sounding cymbal, bright in arms
Elishama their chief his ensign rear'd,
Which to his host the useful lesson taught
Of patience, figur'd by the lab'ring ox:
Last in the north the multitude of Dan
With Naphtali and Asher close the rear:
These, when Ahiezer with mighty voice,
Heard through the files of their extended line,
Gave the word forth to march, upsent a shout,
That now proclaim'd their prophet's high behest
To the last man obey'd: they had assum'd
A prouder attribute, and on their flag,
Emblazon'd rich with silver and with gold,
Pourtray'd an eagle, towering in his flight,
Within whose grasp a scaly serpent writh'd;
Noting how high ascendant valour soars,

And o'er opposing subtilty prevails.
  Thus march'd the armies forth from van to rear,
And them betwixt a helpless multitude
Of women and of children were dispos'd;
Whilst in the centre of the host was stor'd
All that in Goshen's land they had amass'd,
The spoils of Egypt, silver, gold and gems:
There went their flocks and herds, and those, who bore
Time-honour'd Joseph's yet unburied corpse
Tow'rds Shechem's promis'd field—Such the decree
Of Moses, mindful of their father's oath,
Pledg'd to their dying patron, not to leave
His bones in Egypt. Onward thus they mov'd,
Their minds untainted yet by discontent,
Their strength entire, their instant wants supplied,
And with the inspiring shout of myriads cheer'd.
  Two days across the desart they advanc'd;
The third now dawn'd; again the trumpet call'd,
Again the voice of Joshua urg'd the march:
Dreary was all around; the shades of night,

With short vouchsafement of perturbed sleep,
Were fled; no dews had cool'd the burning sand;
Hunger had thinn'd their now diminisht flocks,
And raging thirst drain'd their late copious store
Of water, from the wells of Goshen drawn:
Then 'gan their faith to shake, for every sigh,
That weariness half utter'd, half suppress'd,
Spread and was echo'd through the fainting throng:
The whispering breeze was swelling to a storm,
And Korah with malicious triumph saw
His pois'nous leaven working in their hearts,
When Joshua, of the armed tribes the chief
And leader militant, with eye that search'd
Each heart where rankling disaffection lurk'd,
Tempering reproof with consolation spake.
"Soldiers, beware! ye've had the word to march
Why halt you then? Have I recall'd the word?
He must be weary of his life, or mad,
Who dares to disobey me, and arrest
The armies of the Lord, whilst I command.

Ye men of Judah, is not yours the van ?
Therefore advance, or to the central tribes,
Worthier than you, that honour'd post resign.
And what is it whereof ye would complain,
If murmuring could redress you ? Do ye thirst ?
Lo, where at distance yonder palmy grove
Invites you to her springs ; there drink your fill
Of Nature's beverage under Nature's shade."
He ceas'd ; and instantly the warrior-tribe,
Their lion-standard flaunting in the wind,
With quicken'd step advanc'd : at sight whereof
The cloud, late dark upon the hero's brow,
Dispers'd, and joy now brighten'd in his eyes :
Much were they cheer'd by the approving look,
Which now they witness'd, as he turn'd to note
Their orderly demeanour, and athwart
The trackless waste strait to the wisht-for spot
Speeded their eager march ; there when arriv'd
They saw, o'ershadow'd by the spreading palms,
A range of brimming wells by Edom's sons,

The rude possessors of the country, dug,
To boundless ecstacy their spirits rose:
Order was lost; the march became a race;
All ran, all strove, and happiest was he,
Who first could seize his portion of the pool,
And lift the welcome chalice to his lips—
Vain haste! no sooner did it meet his touch,
But with disgust revolting from the draught,
Than gall more bitter, to the ground he dash'd
Th' intolerable potion: horror-struck,
In mute amazement pondering their distress,
By disappointment doubly thus enhanc'd,
Some in despair refus'd the proffer'd cup,
Whilst others, spite of its repulsive taste,
The nauseous beverage boldly tried to quaff,
But all in vain: then burst their sorrows forth,
And thus to Moses, now in sight, they spake.
"Servant and friend of God; if such thou art,
And we his people, why hast thou deceiv'd
And lur'd us hither, to expire with thirst

In sight of waters, which we cannot taste?
Is it for this from Egypt's land we came?
Thrice-happy land, through which the bounteous Nile
Pours life and health from his capacious urn;
Oh, for one draught of that refreshing stream
What composition would be now too much?
Seer, in thy potency oh lead us back;
Let us re-pace our weary steps, and live,
Though 'twere in bondage heavier than the past,
With stricter task-masters and harder toils:
Contrasted with this mis'ry, better far
And happier had it been, if the vext sea,
When its wild waves on Pharaoh's host recoil'd,
Had swept us with them to its deep abyss.
Father, at whose command we came, on whom
Rests our last hope, we know, for we have seen,
Thy wonder-working power, oh hear our prayer,
And save thy children perishing with thirst;
Lift up thy hands and bring us show'rs from Heaven,
Or make this loathsome pool a living spring,

And purify its waters to preserve us."
They said, nor did their sufferings fail to move
The heart of their meek prophet; to the throne
Of mercy he put up his fervent prayer
For inspiration; instantly it rush'd
Like a full torrent o'er his labouring soul,
Full of his God—" Approach, he loudly cried,
With lively faith approach and quench your thirst!"
Then pluck'd a bough from an o'erhanging tree,
And cast it on the waters—" Lo! 'tis done,
Again he cried, the miracle's complete:
God, whose long-suffering goodness ye provoke,
When thus ye doubt his providence, by me
Commands these bitter waters to be sweet,
Wholesome and pure; and greater works than this
God will vouchsafe, if faithful ye abide:
Approach! but ere you slake your burning thirst
In the cool fountain, than the Nile more clear
And like his stream exhaustless, know 'tis God
Bestows the blessing, and to God alone

Give all your praise; to me no praise is due."
He ceas'd, and from the well a goblet rais'd
With water fill'd, fresh as the unsunn'd rill,
That from the cavern'd grot translucent flows.
The admiring multitude, with awe impress'd,
The welcome boon receiv'd; to all was dealt
The life-restoring draught—When thus the seer.
"Ye waters, which the mercy of our God
Hath thus converted, henceforth to all time
Be Marah call'd! Bitter hath been your taste,
Bitter shall be your name. Hear, Israel, hear,
And whilst your tongues record the wond'rous deed,
Remember 'twas at Marah's bitter pool
Ye murmur'd, and by miracle were sav'd."
All saw, and all exultingly proclaim'd
The witnest miracle; from tribe to tribe
The word of triumph ran—"Behold a sign,
A token that the Lord is our defence;
We are the armies of the living God;
Who shall withstand us?" Thus with nerves new brac'd

And hearts high-beating they resum'd their march;
Nor stay'd their progress till to Elim's wells
They came, what time across the western sky
The variegated clouds of evening stole,
And with them brought exhausted Nature's cure,
The soothing balm of sweet oblivious sleep.
Soon as the day-spring glimmer'd in the east,
Or ere the kindling sun began to launch
His fiery arrows through the sulphurous air,
The early trumpet gave the warning note,
Whose call imperious bids the soldier rouse,
And warrants no delay. The palmy grove
And springs of Elim mournfully they leave;
For desolation here embay'd them round,
Whether to Pharan's rocks, or Sinai's mount,
Or the sea-margin they shall bend their course.
Scene more disconsolate had never spread
Its horrors to their view: languid and slow,
In suffocating clouds of dust involv'd,
The fainting soldier held his weary way

Over the burning soil: it seem'd as here
Nature had breath'd her last, and made this spot
Of man and beast the universal grave.
Joshua, who saw that now the time was come
When hope, if not recall'd, would quickly fail,
And let despair possess the minds of men,
Thus in familiar phrase address'd the host.
"Comrades, I own it is a painful march,
Which with gall'd feet over the scorching sands
We must of force pursue, but 'tis our part
To meet all chances with an equal mind.
If we, who are the strength of Israel, faint,
How will the ag'd, the infant and the throng
Of helpless females struggle with their fate?
These sufferings ye can bear, for they are short,
And I should wrong your courage could I doubt.
If more than human nature can endure,
Famine or thirst, invade us, we have God
For our provider, nor will He, who made
The bitter waters sweet to quench our thirst,

Permit these sunbeams to extinguish life,
And strew this desart with the bones of us,
Whom he has call'd his armies, and decreed
To purge the nations, and erect the throne
Of his salvation in its holy place."
  This said, the hero ceas'd, for now he saw
The fire rekindled in his soldiers' hearts,
Which, but for his reanimating breath,
Had languish'd and expir'd; from rank to rank
The consolation spread, and straight behold!
By the example of the army's chief
The leaders of the several tribes stood forth,
And with loud voices dealt their mandates out,
Mild or incentive, as to each seem'd meet
And fitted to the temper of the time.
  Reverend with years the sage Gamaliel stood,
His white beard mantling o'er his aged breast,
And to Manasseh's sons at large discours'd
(No thrifty orator) of ancient times,
When to the patriarch Abraham and his seed

God gave the promise, and with pious zeal
Will'd them to trust in God's unerring word.
  Towering as Atlas, mail'd in burnisht steel,
Elishama, the rock of Ephraim's strength,
Bade halt his legion, and from forth their ranks
Advancing, loud and confident he spake:
Careless of ornament, he little sought
To grace his speech, but in the soldier's phrase
Bade them arouse their courage, and prepare
For glorious vict'ries to be won, and hordes
Of outcast pagans, countless as the sand,
Doom'd to be swept away, or ere they reach'd
The promis'd region—"Thus, he cried, we'll break
Their banded multitudes"—and at the word
In his strong grasp he seiz'd, and snapp'd in twain
His massy javelin, like an ozier twig.
  Now march'd the army; those of stronger frame
Their weaker comrades cheer'd, or to their lips
Rais'd the refreshing draught, or led them on,
As with enfeebled and precarious step

O'er the loose sand they struggled to advance.
Before them Pharan's long-stretcht mountains rang'd,
High, rude and cragged, ting'd with ghastly shades
Of red and black, demonstrating the force
Of the fierce sunbeams; on their peaked tops,
To man impervious, vultures build their nests,
Whilst in the dells and hollows cow'ring lurk
The savage foragers, who or in troops
Pursue their timid prey, or lonely prowl;
But these to Israel's host no terror gave,
And much it gladden'd them to find the soil,
Where'er the mountains stretch'd their rocky base,
No longer yielding to the passer's foot,
But, like the beach by ocean lav'd, compact.
  Here, as they gaz'd upon the rude display
Of Nature's wild sublimity in view,
A group of lofty palm trees they espied:
With grateful ardour on they rush'd to share
The liquid treasures, which their shade conceal'd:
They drank, and had their fill, but to appease

Their hunger little now remain'd in store,
And of that little their despair made waste:
Nor were there wanting spirits pre-dispos'd
To cherish discontents; but even these
Through very weariness had sunk to sleep,
When Joshua, captain of the host, went forth
In silence of the night, and to the tent,
Where by his wakeful lamp in thought profound
Sate the meek servant of the Lord, he came;
And him approaching with obeisance due,
Thus to the prophet spake the warrior chief
"Father, I know thy God will not permit
This multitude to die for lack of food;
Yet, as befits my duty, I have search'd,
And find remaining nor of bread nor flesh
Wherewith to furnish out to-morrow's meal;
Such is our dearth; and when the trumpet sounds,
And I command to march, if then they say—
'Give us to eat'—what answer shall I make?"
To him the prophet without pause replied—

" My son, to say what answer thou shalt make,
When the exhausted soldier cries for food,
Is not with me, but God; for what am I,
That I should aught conceive as of myself?
God gave the promise; with a mighty hand
He brought us forth, and in a fiery cloud
Marshall'd our way into this wilderness;
Can I then doubt if he will leave us here,
Without a token of his providence,
To faint and perish? No, on these bare rocks
He can prepare a table, and command
The very dews of Heaven, that now descend
Upon these barren sands, to be as bread,
And feed his people. Fear not then their cry,
Though envious Korah and Eliab's sons
Join in their clamorous appeal for food.
Great things, my son, are coming to the birth,
And he, that dares to murmur, ere the sun
Shall rise to-morrow, silenc'd and abash'd,
Shall in his cloud of glory see the Lord.

Great things our God hath done, but greater far
The things, that shall hereafter be reveal'd:
And thou, the highly favour'd of the Lord,
Shalt see and know and understand to do them.
And now no more; for I perceive the word
Of power is even now gone forth. Depart!
See that thou halt not by the way, or turn
To gaze around, above thee or behind;
For the providing angel is come down,
And from his wings, in dewy manna steep'd,
Sheds through the hallow'd air celestial food."
He ceas'd; the warrior to his tent return'd,
The prophet in the spirit to his God.
Next morning with the first return of light,
Behold, the ground about the camp was strew'd
With what appear'd like honey-dew congeal'd,
Sweet to the taste, substantial, silv'ry-white,
In fashion like the coriander seed,
And as the hoar-frost small; this when they saw,
They wist not what it was, and wond'ring cried—

'Tis manna—Strait from Moses came the word—
"'Tis the Lord's bread; let him, that hungers, eat:
Bring forth your omers, fill them to the brim;
He, that o'erflows, shall nought superfluous gain,
And he, that gathers little, shall not lack:
Let no man leave of it, for day by day
God will provide, and all that ye reserve
Corruption shall defile."—So Moses spake,
And God was glorified, and Israel sav'd.
Thus from the elemental stores the host,
By miracle supplied, resum'd their march
Across the gloomy wilderness of Zin.
From the high peak of Pharan's rocky mount,
In quick succession floating through the sky,
Thick clouds were wafted, whiter than the fleece,
On which at Ophrah fell the dews of Heaven.
By these protected from the noon-tide rays,
And by fresh breezes fann'd, dispensing health,
From Amorrhea's eastern range of hills,
Daphca they pass'd, and now beyond the range

Of Pharan's towering heights they had advanc'd
To Alus, bordering on the Red Sea coast,
Where Amalek in savage grandeur reign'd;
When lo! a troop of horsemen they espied,
Whose helmets by the snow-white plumes surcharg'd
Of the pluckt ostrich, and the martial air
Of their fleet phalanx wheel'd in close array,
To all the heav'n-fed multitude gave sign
That here no men of peace they should expect.
And now, when nearer seen, each in his hand
Brandish'd the warrior's spear, and on they came,
As if the purpose of their eager course
Had been the van of Israel to assail;
When, on the signal reining in their steeds,
Their leader thus in accent loud and shrill
His brief abrupt interrogations urg'd—
"Whence and what are ye, strangers? Know ye not
Upon whose soil ye trespass? Wherefore then
Are ye come hither? Instantly declare!"
Him answer'd Joshua thus—"We are the sons

Of Jacob, and from Goshen's land we come
Through the Arabian gulph. You know us now;
Know yourselves also, and of this be sure—
We are not careful whose may be the soil,
For we ask nothing of it, nor find aught
To move our envy, or invite our stay.
Free passage if you give us, it is well;
If not, we must proceed without your leave,
And yours must be the peril, if you stay us.
This is our answer. Now say, is it peace?"
Him sternly viewing thus the chief replied—
"Peace with the race of Jacob? Peace with those,
In whom no trust we place? It cannot be.
Suffice to say that we are Esau's sons,
And from his first-born Eliphaz derive
These mountain fortresses, and wide domain,
Whose barriers, over Idumea stretcht,
Some like yourselves unprivileg'd have pass'd,
But none unpunisht ere departed thence."
He said, nor paus'd to hear, but in the flank

Of his proud warhorse buried his sharp spur,
And towards his native mountains sped his course;
Him follow'd close his well-appointed troop:
Like distant thunder sounded the firm hoofs
Of their fleet steeds over the rocky soil,
And clouds of dust their winding progress mark'd.
Onward they press'd, till from Rephidim's heights
The wide encampment of their prince they saw,
Stretching in pomp barbaric o'er the plain.
High o'er the rest the royal tent arose,
With martial emblems deck'd and spoils of war:
There, shelter'd from the sun's meridian beams,
Imperial Amalek repos'd; around
His watchful guard patroll'd, that none might break
His sacred slumbers; but no awe restrain'd
The speed of Omar; from the mountain's side
Across the plain his rapid course he bent.
Him the astonisht multitude beheld
With his impetuous squadron pass the camp,
Their panting horses white with foam, themselves

With travel hot, and heedless of the throng,
Which, still augmenting, follow'd with shrill cries
Of mingled fear and wonder. To the tent
As they approach'd, more dissonant and loud
Their yelling clamour grew. From slumber rous'd,
Uncertain what the tumult might portend,
Forthwith the monarch snatch'd his javelin up,
And half-accoutred rush'd from out his tent:
At sight whereof Omar with sudden spring
Leapt from his steed, and thus with aspect wild
And hurried accent eagerly exclaim'd—
"To arms, brave Amalek! behold us charg'd
With tidings, that announce immediate war.
Already on the confines of your realm
An insolent aggressor mocks your power,
And dares you to resistance. Jacob's sons,
Freed from Egyptian bondage, and, array'd
In warlike state, across the desart march,
Intent on conquest"—More he would have said,
When Amalek indignantly broke forth—

" What conquest, but by treachery and fraud,
Can Jacob's base descendants gain from us,
To war not less accustom'd and inur'd,
Than they to slavery and inglorious crafts,
For women and mechanics only fit ?"
" Despise them not, the veteran chief replied,
But in your wisdom pause, whilst I relate
What it concerns the nation's lord to hear
Of my discovery of this mighty host,
Now in the very bowels of our land,
And almost in our camp. Upon the height
Of Jetabata as I held my post,
To watch if haply in my prospect's range
Merchants, from Gilead or Assyria charg'd
With spices, precious balsams, myrrh and gold,
Their passage might essay, I turn'd my eyes
Tow'rds Alus, and behold the desart blaz'd
With glittering arms to the horizon's verge.
Amaz'd to see such myriads on their march,
Where the indignant soil alike refus'd

Or food or shelter, and, unless sustain'd
By miracle, they must of force have died,
I deem'd it right more nearly to inspect
What they might be and whence. Upon the word
My gallant comrades vaulted on their steeds,
And follow'd where I led them, till we came
In front of what appear'd to be the van
Of this embattled nation, when behold,
One, whose high bearing mark'd him as their chief,
A youthful warrior—and in truth, dread Sir,
Right worthy he appear'd—from forth the ranks
Advanc'd and bade them halt; this done, they form'd
In orderly array, alike prepar'd
To wait the parley, or abide the charge.
While thus in numbers confident they stood,
Their unfurl'd ensigns waving in the wind,
Expecting our appeal, I loudly ask'd
Why thus upon our confines they encroach'd,
And what and whence they were and whither bound:
To this their captain instant answer gave—

'They were the sons of Jacob, and had pass'd
From Pharaoh's realm across th' Arabian gulph:
They were not careful whose the country was;
It yielded nothing, and they felt no want;
They sought not war with us, and should prefer
To take their journey through our land in peace;
But, if oppos'd, the peril would be ours.'
This threat'ning speech indignantly I heard,
And, as became me, answer'd; then with speed
I hasted hither, in your royal ear
Of what had thus occurr'd the sum to state—"
" I've heard enough, th' impatient prince replied;
Whilst in these veins the blood of Esau flows,
No pulse within this vital frame shall beat,
That does not beat the summons to revenge;
No thought in this recording heart shall dwell,
But of eternal war with Jacob's sons,
And hatred deep as Jacob's perfidy.
More guileful than the crocodile, that lurks
In fatal ambush on the banks of Nile,

More noxious than the pestilential south,
That sweeps the wilderness with mortal blast,
Was he, from whom these hordes of slaves descend;
Therefore no peace with them; for as the source
So is the stream; each son is Jacob's self,
And in each mother a Rebecca lives.
In falsehood they were born; upon their lips
Their founder stamp'd th' hereditary lie,
And it abides; for lo! as he deceiv'd
His father Isaac when by age grown blind,
And stole a blessing from the elder-born,
So they from us by artifice would wrest
These ample districts, our inheritance,
Intent on plunder whilst professing peace.
But we, whose cities are the tented field,
Who exercise no arts but those of war,
A nation ever ready, ever arm'd,
'Gainst all invaders will maintain our rights:
And what have we to fear from Jacob's race,
Outcasts of Egypt, who to Pharaoh's yoke

For ages past have tamely bow'd the neck?
Come they not here yet smarting with the scourge,
Their hands yet hard with labour, and their limbs
Scarr'd with ignoble stripes? Let them approach:
Myriads of slaves like these appal not me,
Who in my people's hearts have built my throne,
Strong as their courage, stedfast as their truth.
Though Egypt's thousand gods could not withstand,
Nor the seas stay them, nor the desart starve,
Yet when the trumpet sounds, as soon it shall,
The charge to battle, and the fatal twang
Of Chemos' bow high o'er their heads is heard,
Terror shall seize and turn to shameful flight
Their dastard tribes; then conquest shall be ours,
Glory and great revenge shall crown our arms,
And Chemos, fed with hecatombs of slain,
Shall stop his flaming chariot, where he sits
With glittering shafts, and garments roll'd in blood,
To share our triumph and enjoy our praise."
This said, he drove his javelin in the ground,

And, turning to the assembled people, cried—
" Bring stones, and build an altar on this spot.
Behold, the shadow shews that noon is past.
Haste, and propitiate your descending God !"
No more, 'twas done; a massy pile of stones,
The tribute of a thousand hands, arose,
Rude as the art, that rear'd it. Thither flock'd
Diviners, dreamers, visionary seers,
Magicians, minstrels, sacrificing priests,
With all their pagan trumpery, a crew
Of moon-struck wretches, all prepar'd to storm
With dismal howlings their deaf idol's ears,
And lance their flesh, and weave their mystic dance
Around his altar—rites profane and vile—
" Hear us, O Chemos, hear us !" was their cry
From the third hour incessant, till the sun,
Red in the west, went down, a rayless ball,
Merg'd in a fiery cloud: whereat each eye
Aghast was turn'd on that ill-omen'd sign,
And silence reign'd and terror seiz'd the throng.

This when the king perceiv'd—" Prepare, he cried,
Prepare your victims to appease the wrath
Of the malicious demon, that has dash'd
Our setting sun with cloud of threat'ning hue."—
Strait on the altar leapt th' infuriate priests,
Stript to the waist, their obscene bodies bar'd
And gash'd with bleeding wounds: no stop, no pause
For rest or silence; all night long the flames
Glar'd horribly, and dreadful were the groans
Of dying victims, mingling with the shrieks
Of frantic mothers, whose devoted babes
Were made to pass through fire—impious device,
Project conceiv'd of Satan to assuage
The disappointed malice and revenge
Of his heav'n-exil'd angels, and deride
That typical oblation, offer'd up
By faithful Abraham on Moriah's mount,
Where stood the church of God in after-times,
When by the one great sacrifice for sin
Once made, the whole Satanic league receiv'd

Their second downfall, never more to rise.
While thus around their altar, with the blood
Of human victims streaming, Esau's sons,
Alien from God, their impious orgies plied,
Deaf'ning the ear of night with direful yells,
Not such the scene where Israel was encamp'd;
There stillness reign'd and sorrow-soothing sleep
Threw its oblivious mantle o'er the limbs
Of the way-wearied soldier. Joshua still
In council with the assembled leaders sate;
For long debate ensued, and some there were,
Who held not with the advocates for war:
These were for soothing measures, nor approv'd
The high and dauntless tone, in which their chief
Had parley'd with th' Amalekitish troop—
" Why thus renew, they cried, the ancient feuds,
Too long maintain'd 'twixt the fraternal tribes
Of Jacob and of Esau? Why provoke
The sword of Amalek, as if our march
Over this hideous desart, and the care

Of all this multitude were not enough,
Unless we brav'd fresh dangers, and contriv'd
This unprovok'd aggression to insult
And weary out the mercies of our God ?"
  Thus with the show of reason, but with hearts,
By faction tainted, and by envy steel'd
Against their youthful leader, they had hop'd
By these inglorious councils to degrade
And tarnish his high fame; for Dathan there,
And, him beside, Abiram in the roll
Of Reuben's princes held their state, and sate
Darkling in close cabal; but vain their plots
And impotent their malice; calm contempt,
Disdaining answer, mark'd the hero's brow,
And when Elishama, whose fiery zeal
Ill brook'd their chilling argument, arose
Impatient to reply, with outstretcht hand
Imposing silence, thus the chieftain spake.
  " Stop, brave Elishama! we know your zeal
For Israel's glory and Jehovah's cause.

Words are not needed when the warrior's soul
Speaks in his eyes, and every feature glows
With the bright flame, that kindles at his heart.
Am I not in your bosom? Yes, I know
You and your gallant tribe alone would meet
This haughty challenger, who dares defy
The armies of the Lord; but though to you,
To Caleb and to Nahshon it belongs,
With other generous spirits like your own,
To brave the front of battle, there remains
A duty not less urgent to defend
The Levites and the women, nor shall war
Prevent us to devote a strong reserve
To this important charge; and now no more—
The night gains on us. Princes, elders, chiefs!
By the authority on me devolv'd
I here dismiss your council, and commend
Each in his proper station to devote
The hours 'twixt this and morning to repose."
He said, nor did they not obey the word

With voice and look imperative announc'd,
But rising, as with one accord, dispers'd.
Caleb alone, by signal from the chief,
Stay'd his departure, when, as friend to friend,
After short pause and one prelusive sigh,
Half utter'd, half supprest, thus Joshua spake.
" Warrior, by Moses in the power of God
Elect to great achievements, thou hast heard
These men, who counsel ignominious peace
With these idolatrous and pagan hordes,
Whose residence within this waste we knew,
And for whose coming we had cause to look ;
For how can they be other than our foes,
And of that stock, which must be rooted up
Ere we can plant our seed in Canaan's soil ?
Why then do these peace-advocates essay
To check our vengeance, when the word of power
Bids us advance ? Is it because they love
Peace and its blessings, courtesy, content
And decent order ? These doth Dathan love ?

These doth Abiram? No, they talk of peace,
Whilst war is in their hearts—Now, Caleb, mark!
When on their Arab steeds these pagans rush
Impetuous to the charge, reserve your strength,
And when you meet the chieftain, whom we saw,
Strike the proud vaunter down: but if the king,
If Amalek himself shall head his troop,
There is our mark, my friend, that is a prize
Worthy our best ambition, though we drain
In the brave struggle every vital drop,
And die for Israel's glory."—Here he paus'd,
Whilst, as his fancy pictur'd forth the scene,
A ruddier tint, true valour's native hue,
His glowing cheek assum'd—When Caleb thus—
" Rightly you judge my heart, illustrious chief:
In friendship, as in duty, it is yours;
And that bright honour, which you hold to view,
Is than the blood, that visits it, more dear.
If in to-morrow's fight I fail to earn
The glorious meed of my commander's praise,

Let not Jephunneh own me for his son;
But if I fall, and you—so grant it, Heaven!—
Survive to bless our Israel, by the love,
Which my soul bears you, tell my aged sire
How I have died, and it shall heal his grief."
" Enough! replied the chief; thy pious charge,
If life is granted me, shall be obey'd.
Now to thy tent, and may the God we serve
Pour on thy temples that heart-healing rest,
Which nerves the arm with vigour to achieve
Those generous darings, that become the brave:
And now farewell! We conquer, or we fall."
This said, the chieftain from his couch arose,
And, as he grasp'd the warrior's hand, awhile
Pensive he stood, as if to lengthen out
The parting moment; then with look, that made
Silence more eloquent than speech, he loos'd
His tender hold, when Caleb bow'd the head,
As to his chief, and issued from the tent.
Now in the spangled firmament full-orb'd

The moon effulgent rode; from forth his tent,
In solemn musings wrapt and care-opprest,
Moses, the chosen of the Lord, went forth,
And tow'rds the centre of the camp, where stood
The altar of Jehovah, bent his course.
Him when the guard Levitical, who watch'd
The sacred spot, descried, with silent step,
Cautious of interruption, they fell back,
And with their eyes fixt on the earth, their hands
Upon their bosoms reverently cross'd,
Stood motionless. Awhile the prophet paus'd,
In thought profound immers'd, and upward cast
A meek imploring look, and bow'd his head
Before the altar bare and silvery white;
Then, kneeling, thus in pray'r besought his God.
" Father of Heav'n, in whom all nature lives,
And by whose mercy all things are upheld,
Deign with thy gracious favour to behold
And hear thy supplicant, who humbly prays
For these thy servants in this hour of need,

When hordes of enemies, not less to thee
And thy pure worship hostile than to them,
Are arming for the battle. Gracious Lord,
Not now, not in this perilous extreme,
When lo! in thee confiding, as beneath
The shadow of thy wings, they rest,—not now
Their murmurings, their offences call to mind,
But spare thy people, Lord! Oh, not this night,
Whilst those yet sleep, that ere to-morrow's sun
Sink in the west shall sleep to wake no more,
Let Korah's contumacious sin provoke
Thy wrath to strike: Oh, rather turn his heart,
Teach him to shun the peril of his way,
And save him from the pit. Stretch forth thine hand,
And let not these idolaters prevail
Against thy servant Joshua; let not these,
The apostate race of Esau, who advance
With Chemos for their god, presume to stand
Before the armies of the Lord of Hosts.
Not for my sake, for I am nothing worth,

And nothing dare to ask, but for the sake
Of righteous Abraham, lead these children on,
Heirs of the blessing, to the promis'd land,
And manifest thy glory to the world."
He rose, and turning to the east espied
White in the lunar beam the tow'ring plume
And glittering mail, that grac'd the youthful form
Of Israel's chieftain. On the hero came,
Observ'd of Moses; when, as he approach'd
The sacred altar, lowering to the dust
His spear, till then uplifted, thus he spake.
" Why is the health of Israel thus expos'd
To the night-air? It is not now the hour
For age like thine to tempt th' unfriendly damps,
That from the steaming pores of earth exhale:
Behold thy tent and Aaron's both in view;
There seek the shelter'd couch and shun the night."
" Son, said the prophet, when the Lord so wills,
Death in the noon-day walks as in the night;
And who should watch the folded sheep but he,

Who is their shepherd? Why, when all the camp
Is wrapt in sleep and silence, do we see
The station'd centinel upon his post,
Where duty plants him? So am I on mine,
Whilst in this hour of danger I come forth,
And seek the Lord in pray'r. Full sure I am,
That with to-morrow's dawn we must approve
The temper of our swords upon the crest
Of Amalek, the hereditary foe
Of all, that spring from Jacob: wherefore then
Dost thou, the leader of the host, refuse
That wholesome rest, so needed to recruit
And nerve thee for the battle? Speak, my son;
Why are thy looks so troubled? Stout the heart
And strong should be the confidence to bear
The burden of command so vast as thine."

To him the chief—"When the contagious taint
Of Korah's perfidy hath sapp'd the zeal
Of some, that hold command in Israel's tribes,
And I perceive myself their envy's mark,

Needs must my looks be troubled, whilst my heart
Is tortur'd with its feelings. Much I fear
Too fav'ring and too gracious thou hast been
To thy unworthy servant. When I weigh
My station's various duties, and with them
My youth and insufficiency compare,
Like some stray traveller, who from the verge
Of a tremendous precipice looks down
With horror on th' appalling gulf below,
My fancy sickens, and methinks I see
Unnumber'd ills, a family of woes,
All sprung from my unfitness; I behold
Our host by me conducted to their graves,
I view them as they bleeding lie, mine ears
Ring with their dying groans. Oh mighty seer,
These are my visions, and, if these be true,
Give me a private station in the fight,
And let me earn an honourable grave,
Remote from envy, in my nation's cause."
" No more of this! the glowing prophet cried;

Though merit never with more grace appears
Than when in blushing diffidence array'd,
There is a time when virtue must be bold,
And, self-confiding, with the armed hand
Of strong authority pull down the flag,
That upstart rash sedition else will rear.
Go forth, my son, and put thy trust in Him,
To whom the secrets of all hearts are known.
The Lord will be with Judah; Ephraim's spear
Shall not be broken, nor Manasseh's bow.
Strong is my hope, that from the mountain's peak
When I survey the battle, God will see
Th' uplifting of my hands and hear my pray'r.
And now depart—Heav'n's mercy be thy guard!
And when this hoary head, bow'd down with age,
Shall be remitted to its kindred dust,
Advancing still in virtue and renown,
Jehovah's conqu'ring armies thou shalt lead
To their predestin'd seat, and there behold
The glorious promise to the fathers giv'n

Made perfect and apportion'd to the sons."
He ceas'd; and as when soft descending dew
Falls on the grateful earth, fresh springs the grass,
Nature revives, the fainting flow'rets live,
And mingled sweets are wafted through the air;
So with the prophet's words the cloud, that hung
Dark on the hero's brow, dispers'd, and bright
And clear the flame of his ambition glow'd.
Soon as the morning dawn'd the awak'ning blast
Of the shrill trumpet sounded to array:
Nahshon the whilst by Joshua's command
Had drawn the men of Judah forth, and form'd
Far in the van apart; when soon, behold,
Elishama with Ephraim from the west,
Back'd by Manasseh's bowmen, was descried
Ranging his close-form'd columns in the rear
Of Judah's warriors, marshall'd for the fight.
This done, the leaders of th' embattled tribes
By signal to the army's front advanc'd,
Where stood their chief with Caleb by his side,

Both bright in arms and mail'd from heel to helm;
When Joshua thus—" Illustrious chiefs, on you
And on your conduct in th' impending fight
(I name not courage—yours admits no doubt)
The fame, the fortune of our Israel rests.
Three tribes, enough for glory, I select
From all our host to quell this recreant foe,
Born of our stock, but from our faith estrang'd.
Full well ye know renown how dearer far
Than life it is, how worse than death disgrace.
Last night, when some there were, who spake of peace,
'Twas then I noted, then I read your hearts:
Then, brave Gamaliel, I beheld you rise
Reverend with sage experience, whilst all ears
Hung on your speech, and every tongue was husht:
Smooth flow'd your words, but deep and strong the stream
Of their resistless eloquence—I heard;
And by your wisdom and your zeal confirm'd,
I felt secure in my resolve for war.
Now, as in council great, be great in arms;

Manasseh's warriors will not shame their chief."
To him Gamaliel—" Joshua, for myself,
For my especial tribe, and all, who hear
Or but at distance witness your address,
Thus, whilst I press upon my falchion's blade
My lips in token of my honour's pledge,
I give myself to shame, if I or these,
Whom I command, desert you in the fight,
And swerve from our affiance. No, brave youth,
Whom I announce for mighty conquests born,
We will not tarnish the great name we bear.—
Our leader is Jehovah—Chemos theirs;
Who then can doubt of victory but those,
That grudge the palm to Moses and to thee?"
And now Elishama essay'd to speak—
Tow'ring he stood, a monument of strength,
His dark brow beetling o'er his deep-sunk eye.
" Here is my heart, the gallant warrior cried,
'Tis God's, 'tis Israel's, and, whilst yet it beats,
Joshua, 'tis thine. In Ephraim's tribe alone

We number fifty thousand fighting men,
And hold ourselves well able to confront
These hunters of the desart, who bestride
Their horses, and conceive them a defence
Against our spears—vain hope and vain defence,
As soon their scatter'd multitude shall prove."
Frowning he ceas'd—To him the chief replied.—
" For thee, Elishama, my only wish
Is to restrain thy valour, lest the light
Of Ephraim be extinguisht, and amidst
Our joys for victory we mourn for him,
Who bled to gain it. Warriors, you command
Those, whom the pillar'd seas could not oppose:
Are these barbarians stronger than the waves,
That we should fear them—swifter than the winds,
That we should plot how to escape their rage?
No, such inglorious projects suit not us,
Who fight beneath the banners of our God.
Therefore, brave Nahshon, at the word unfurl
Your lion-standard! Sound, ye trumpets, sound

A loud defiance from your brazen throats,
And waft it, echoes, to Rephidim's rocks!"—
No more; by Nahshon instantly unfurl'd
Judah's broad banner floated in the wind.
When as the columns militant beheld,
The sword of Joshua, signal for their march,
High waving o'er his lion-crested helm,
Onward they mov'd; and as with measur'd step
Over the rocky soil they held their way,
Their burnisht helmets and high-ported spears
Bright in the horizontal sunbeams play'd,
Till far behind them Pharan's rocks they left,
And tow'rds Rephidim, where sublimely rose
Horeb's vast mass, and Sinai's tow'ring brow,
With energy, as yet uncheckt, they came.
And now, the prospect varying as they pass'd,
The rocks in rude magnificence arose,
And, closing tow'rds each other, left a strait,
As 'twixt two massy walls, deep, unexplor'd,
Commodious covert for an ambusht foe.

Here whilst the cautious chieftain stay'd his march,
By those, who scal'd the craggy heights, was seen
The hostile army covering all the plain.
Instant the tribes elect with quicken'd step
And front diminisht speeded through the pass,
And on the open champaign by their chief
Form'd into line the firm battalions stood;
Nor did the strong reserve of armed tribes,
Now under sage Ahiezer's command,
Attempt the rocky pass. Moses the whilst,
Led by the spirit to the mountain's top,
Arm'd with the rod of his vicarious power,
Stood eminent, and from his eagle-height
Through the clear air, from mist obstructive purg'd,
From flank to flank each rival host survey'd.
  Rang'd for the battle either army stood
Silent and still as death—tremendous pause!—
When lo! forth-issuing from the Arabian ranks
One, that gave token of a parley, came,
And thus to Joshua the proud pagan spake.—

"The great king sends me. Hear, and mark his words!
Why do the sons of Jacob thus provoke
Instant destruction? Render up your arms,
And so march onwards; or through yonder pass
Retrace your steps back to the Red-Sea coast,
From which ye came—further ye must not come—
So Amalek commands."—"Say to your king,
Joshua replied, we covet not to hold
One spot of earth, that owns him for its lord.
Our arms, as yet with human blood unstain'd,
We cannot spare; the presence of your host
Makes that injunction fruitless; to return
Is not within our choice; the God we serve
Bids us advance, and Him we must obey.
You have our answer. Bear it to your king!"
He said, when instantly the Arab wheel'd
His active steed, and shot across the plain
Swift as the meteor's glance. All eyes the whilst
Were bent to Joshua, anxious to descry
What purpose this short parley might effect.

Nor long was their suspense, for now the foe
Upsent their barbarous war-denouncing yell,
Which with the din of their deep-echoing conchs
And brazen tubes discordant, intermixt
With the shrill neighing of their horses, form'd
A chorus horrible to human ears.
No stop, no pause—In clouds of dust involv'd,
With loose rein spurring their impetuous steeds,
Wild and unform'd, the shouting squadrons rush'd.
Them with undaunted courage Judah's front
On their stout spears receiv'd; they, little us'd
To such rude salutation, soon beheld
Their foremost warriors writhing in the dust,
And spread like waves rebounding from the rock,
Whilst Judah stood unshaken and entire.
This when with eye quick-glancing Joshua saw,
"Advance! he cried, but still in line compact;
They break, they fly; lo! where on yond high mount
Israel's presiding genius, heav'n-inspir'd,
Your prophet with uplifted hands I see,

Invoking victory—and behold, 'tis yours !"
He said; as when with mountain-torrents flusht
Swift-flowing Tigris, or Euphrates deep,
Their rugged banks o'er topping, far and wide
Deluge the fruitful vallies; flocks and herds,
The verdant forests and the golden grain,
The humble cot and richly-sculptur'd dome
In one far-spreading ruin are involv'd;
Soon the troubled squadrons of the foe
Israel collected rush'd, their sturdy spears
Crimson'd in blood, whilst their resounding bows
A deadly show'r discharg'd: for still the seer,
Who smote the waters with his potent rod,
Uplifted wav'd it in the charmed air;
And as the falcon from her towering height
Stoops to her master's lure, so to the hand
Of Moses Victory eagle-wing'd came down
From the bright empyrean, where she sate
At the right hand of Him, who is the God
Of battle, and alighted on the helm

Of Israel's chief, invincible the whilst.
But soon, when Moses could no more uprear
His hands, from age grown heavy, as they sunk,
So sunk the ebbing fortune of the fight;
The rallying hordes press'd sore upon the front
Of Israel's battle, ill prepar'd to meet
So fierce an onset, and their courage quail'd.
As when at midnight ravenous wolves assail
A troop of wandering pilgrims, if they find
Their rage repell'd, with galling wounds provok'd
And madden'd to despair, they turn, they stand,
Then rush on their pursuers, and the field
With mingled streams of gore is all o'erspread;
So with new courage by revenge inspir'd,
And with the sharp upbraidings of their king
Urg'd to repair their shame, the pagan host,
Reckless of life, with imprecations loud
And yelling cries and shouts and dying groans,
Mad as dæmoniacs, rush'd into the fight.
Unnumber'd deeds of valour now were wrought,

And many a gallant combatant was left
Stretcht on th' ensanguin'd plain. With batter'd casque,
And mailed corselet, trencht with many a gash,
All bath'd in blood Elishama was seen
Hewing his passage through the ranks, that fell
Before the whirl of his wide-wasting sword,
As the light stubble to the mower's scythe,
Leaving a swathe behind: hoarse was his voice
With calling out on Amalek; o'erspent
With toil and wounds and at the point to sink,
The red stream oozing through his armour's chinks,
Still terrible he was: him Omar saw
'Midst piles of slain, where most the battle rag'd,
Gasping for breath, and now an easy prey:
Swift flew the javelin from his forceful arm,
And sure its aim, if Caleb on his shield
Had not receiv'd the death-encharged stroke,
Whilst his stout comrades, ever prompt to save
Their valiant leader, bore him from the field.
With rage, resentment, disappointment stung,

"Avenge me, Chemos! the fierce Arab cried;
Grant my vext spirit vengeance, mighty god!
So shall thy steaming altars be regal'd
With hecatombs of these Egyptian slaves.
Come forth, thou stripling, and receive thy death,
Honour too great, for Omar deals the blow."
"Vain is your threat, said Caleb, vain your vow,
For your deaf idol hears not. Know withal,
The stripling, you despise, can trace descent,
If that were merit, nobler than thine own.
Thousands amongst these ranks there may be found
Than me more worthy, but for thee, thou boaster!
Caleb, a private warrior, will suffice."
He said, and onwards rush'd: on his broad shield
The spear of Omar shiver'd in his hand,
Whilst, as his fiery courser held his way,
Caleb his falchion rear'd, and on the side
Of the fierce chieftain struck with mortal aim.—
Deep in his entrails sunk the trenchant blade;
In a black torrent gush'd the blood, his eyes

Roll'd in convulsive agony, and down
Down from his warrior steed, with his last breath
Arraigning his false gods, to earth he fell.
There as he prostrate lay, welt'ring in blood,
His casque with leaves of writhed gold begirt,
The trophy of his conquest, Caleb seiz'd—
" High heav'n be prais'd ! exultingly he cried,
Now are Jephunneh's vows fulfill'd, and now
In his son's triumph shall his age rejoice.
He charg'd me to remember my descent,
And prove myself deserving of his care.
When he shall see this trophy, with delight
His swelling heart shall glow, and hail the gift."
Loud were the shouts from Israel's host upsent,
And now, by Caleb led o'er piles of slain,
They hew'd their way, nor from the carnage ceas'd,
Till o'er the plain dispersing far and wide
The routed squadrons spread—This Moses saw,
And as with interceding hands uprais'd
Trembling he stood—" Assist me, friends, he cried,

My old frame totters; these extended arms,
If not by you upheld, again will droop,
And with them Israel's fortune. On each side
Aaron, and you our brother, the espous'd
Of Miriam, come; support me, or I sink!"—
On the broad fragment of a rock they plac'd
The aged prophet, and his arms sustain'd.
His general slaughter'd and his host dismay'd
When Amalek perceiv'd, impetuous rage
His proud heart swell'd and seiz'd his madd'ning brain,
And venting imprecations on his gods,
His soldiers and his foe, disdaining flight,
And lost to every sense but of revenge,
He stopt, he turn'd, and thus to Israel's host
In vaunting terms his bold defiance hurl'd.
" Slaves of the race of Jacob, if your ranks
Contain one chief, whose station may aspire,
Tho' but at distance, in my sight to stand,
Let him come forth! It is Arabia's king,
'Tis Amalek, who dares him to the fight."

As thus he spake, with sudden awe impress'd
And silent Israel's foremost warriors stood,
So vast his bulk appear'd, so fierce his mien.
On them not answering scornfully he gaz'd,
And in still louder and more taunting phrase
His challenge 'gan repeat, when from the ranks,
Where in the front of Judah's van he fought,
Joshua impetuous rush'd, and thus exclaim'd—
" In me behold the chief of Israel's host,
Who through the thickest of the fight have sought,
And now have found thee, Amalek. Descend
From thy proud steed, if so thy courage prompt,
And on the level champaign, where I stand,
In equal combat let us fairly prove
Whose sword is keenest, Joshua's or thine."
" Now take my answer, Amalek replied,
Lo ! it is ready. At the word he couch'd
His well-aim'd lance, and with the lightning's speed
Rush'd on his challenger ; the furious blade
Glanc'd from the polisht orb of Joshua's shield,

And spent its force in air: th' infuriate king
Drew his bright falchion forth, and from his steed
Leapt on the sounding soil: in burnisht gold
Studded with gems the mailed terror stood
Gigantic, towering o'er the subject heads
Of his dismounted captains, who fell back
And hail'd him with their loud applauding shouts.
As when on savage Barca's torrid soil,
Two lordly lions, in the caves remote
Of the wild desart nurtur'd, each to each
Oppos'd, prepare the mastery to dispute,
Their eyeballs glare, they lash their yellow sides,
The distant forests echo with their roar,
And bloody torrents float the sandy waste;
So dreadful stood the chiefs, whilst all around
The battle paus'd, and awful silence reign'd.
Here in the tawny Arab might be seen
Grandeur and strength Herculean, there a form,
Where health and youth and manly beauty glow'd;
This born to rule by terror, that by love.

And now they meet, they strike; their riven mails
At every gash discharge a crimson stream:
When lo! dissever'd by a thund'ring stroke
Of Amalek's fell blade, the lion-crest
Of Joshua's helm was rent—Loud was the shout
Barbaric: Israel trembled for her chief.
Again the giant king his falchion rear'd,
As if at once the contest to conclude,
When Joshua instantly his 'vantage spied,
And, springing forward, underneath the guard
Of his uplifted cuirass plung'd his sword
Deep to his heart: prone to the earth he fell,
And lay outstretcht; his heaving bosom breath'd
One deep-drawn sigh, and from his gushing wound
The stream, that fed his mighty spirit, burst.
"Joy to my friend! exulting Caleb cried,
And press'd the panting warrior in his arms,
Joy to the champion of Jehovah's host!
So perish Israel's foes! Behold, they fly;
They leave their king, their thousands on the field,

And their fears deem their swiftest speed too slow."
" Draw, bowmen, draw ! Gamaliel loud exclaim'd,
Pour on their coward heads an iron shower,
For death alone can overtake their flight.
But now our hero's bleeding wounds to staunch,
And guard a life, our Israel's proudest boast,
Demands our instant care."—This said, he turn'd
A look of tenderest pity on the chief,
Who now by Caleb and by him upheld,
His batter'd helmet whilst brave Nahshon bore,
With steps slow-dragging o'er the soil retir'd.

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

BOOK THE THIRD.

ARGUMENT.

THE Amalekites are dispersed—Joshua, being wounded in the battle, is visited by Moses and is healed—The altar Jehovah-nissi is built—Perpetual war with Amalek is denounced—Korah confers with the son of Peleth and declaims against Moses—Jethro arrives with the wife and two sons of Moses—Moses entertains him—Jethro addresses the People and departs—Moses admonishes Korah of his danger—The People come to Sinai—They are prepared against the third day—The fearful presence of God upon the mount—Moses receives from God the ten commandments, and recites them to the People.

THE EXODIAD.

BOOK THE THIRD.

THE fight was o'er; the victors kept the field,
The vanquisht to their mountain-holds were fled
On their swift horses, broken and dispers'd:
Silent they straggled o'er the sandy waste;
Horror in every face, on every side
Their wounded comrades writhing in the dust.
Where was their vaunting? Where the proud array
And martial pomp, in which they issu'd forth
Under the standard of their haughty king,
Now number'd with the dead? Israel the whilst

Stood firm, and with the clarion's loud recall
Gave warning to the legions to forbear
Fruitless pursuit: the archer slung his bow,
The weary soldier rested on his spear,
And from the barrier-top, where he had sate
Spectator of the fight, Moses came down
To hail the victory, purchas'd by his prayers.
  Led by Ahiezer, the halted tribes
Rush'd through the rocky pass, and fill'd the plain,
Where, as at first, the host four-fronted stood.
Through all the ranks of Judah ran the cry—
"Why comes not Joshua forth? What stays the chief?
Where is our leader? What unhappy chance
Forbids us to behold him, to embrace
His knees, and crown him with applauding shouts?"
  "Faint are the hopes I cherish, Nahshon said,
And sad the tidings I must needs report
Of life so dear to Israel"—"Cease complaint,
Moses exclaim'd, (for unobserv'd his ear
Had caught the mournful words) let none despair:

God is all merciful"—and forth he went
To seek him and to ask his life of God,
For much he lov'd the man. There when he came,
Stretcht on his couch the fainting hero lay;
There too Elishama, all o'er besprent
With blood, and gasht with honourable wounds,
In death-like trance was wrapp'd. Beside the couch,
Watching the languid breathings of his friend,
In sad and pensive silence Caleb sate:
The outer-tent display'd an armed throng
Of warrior-princes, anxious to enquire
The fate of their brave champion, whilst around
Great was the press; for there upon his bier
Arabia's king, in golden armour clad,
A corpse gigantic, was expos'd to view;
Frowning he laid, and dreadful e'en in death.
  Moses approach'd: the princes and the chiefs
Fell back and left him passage—" Hail, they cried,
Favour'd of Heav'n, all hail! Father, entreat
The Lord of mercy for thy dying son:

The Lord, who gave unto mortality, gives this life
Of the heart-picked seer—a vision he must
And in heaven him stood the ancestral hosts
It is from sleep arose it he started, for it
The sinking circle pursuing it its heart
And then I its sinking sounds. Which is he last
Beneath I it thousand hearts and its veins
And with its sinking sounds. Which is he last
It is all those beneath it the veins
Its sinking circle pursuing it its heart
And in heaven him stood the ancestral hosts
Of the heart-picked seer—a vision he must

And health and strength renew'd. Thou must abide,
But I must pass away: in the Lord's name
Wond'rous will be the things that thou shalt do:
When God hath put the word into thy heart,
The very stars of Heav'n shall hear thy voice;
I see the sun stand still at thy command,
Pois'd in the firmament. Great shalt thou be,
When I, who bid thee live, shall live no more,
And this mortality shall turn to dust;
But give not then unto thyself the praise,
Give it to God, and glorify his name."—
Thus spake the prophet, in the spirit of God
Revealing things to come, auspicious scenes
Of future glory, to th' astonisht sense
Of the reviving hero. He the whilst
Rais'd on his couch, in fixt attention heard
The heav'n-inspir'd disclosure of his fate,
And, for a time abstracted, seem'd as one,
Whose thoughts had wander'd into other worlds;
When after pause he thus address'd the seer.

" But that I know thy truth, and feel the power,
Thy presence hath to stay the hand of death,
Cold at my heart but now, hard to believe,
And far above my reason would appear
The things, which thou foretellest shall be done
Of me, a frail weak mortal; but when now
I rise, as if resurgent from the grave;
When I perceive and know that thou art he,
Whom God hath sent to manifest his power,
And execute his promise to the sons
Of Jacob; when, as in this day, I see
His vengeance wreak'd on the rebellious hordes,
Who hallow idol gods with rites impure,
Can I, who live but on the breath He gives,
Presume as of myself to think or act
But in the furtherance of his gracious will,
And by the aid of his almighty power?
What He now wills, I am; what He decrees
Hereafter I shall be; when He withdraws
My breath, I know this body shall return

To the insensate clay, of which I am.
The glory then I gain rests not with me;
It cannot with corruption make abode;
It is not earthly, it belongs to Heaven.
And now forgive me, gracious as thou art,
If I presume to hope thou art not come,
With power by God all-merciful endow'd,
To heal me only: was it I alone,
Who turn'd the fate of battle? Omar fell
By Caleb's conqu'ring sword; his shield preserv'd
The brave Elishama, when sinking fast
In th' arms of victory, by his valour won:
Turn thine eyes thither, and behold the wreck
Of him, so dreadful to the foes of God.
Shall I revive, and must that hero die?
Oh brave Elishama, thy manly breast
Still heaves in agony, whilst mine is free;
Thy gaping wounds still open their dumb mouths,
And plead to share the balm, that makes me whole."
He said, and on the meek diviner cast

Such a beseeching look, and dropt a tear
On his pale cheek so eloquently mute,
That Moses, eager to assuage his grief,—
" Fear not, my son, replied: God will forgive
The importunity of him, who pleads
For an afflicted brother, and I feel,
By the impressive witness in my heart,
That thy accepted pray'r is with the Lord,
And will bring down like healing with thine own.
Though sorely wounded is Manasseh's chief,
And deep the trance, that locks his senses up,
His sleep is not to death; and know withal,
That he, who eats of that celestial dew,
Which angels feed upon, hath in his blood
An antidote so pure, that, though the sword
May gash, no canker can infect the wound.
And now arise!"—This said, he took the hand
Of the delighted chief, and rais'd him up.
Erect the hero stood: him Caleb saw,
And his brave heart with generous transport glow'd.

Forth from the tent they issu'd, and behold
An altar, so ordain'd of Moses, stood
In centre of the plain. Hither they came,
And thus, when all was still, the prophet spake—
" Sacred to GOD OUR BANNER we erect
This tributary altar, to record
To after-ages, that we gave the praise
To Him, JEHOVAH-NISSI, in whose name
We fought and conquer'd. Now let Israel hear
What He, the judge all-righteous, hath decreed:
No peace shall be with Amalek. He died,
As he had liv'd, in blood; his sin is rank;
His bold defiance of the Lord your God
Hath from the book of mercy struck his name,
And Israel must not make forbidden truce
With his apostate hordes, who, from the faith
Of holy Abr'ham swerving, hath decreed
Altars, oblations, rites profane and vile
To Chemos, and renounc'd his father's God:
Too long hath his intolerable pride

Been suffer'd to usurp the bleeding earth,
And tread the nations down; the sun, the moon
And the chaste stars have sicken'd to behold
Crimes so unnatural, orgies so accurst:
Therefore, O Joshua, in the name of Him,
W ho gave thee life and victory, I require,
That on this altar thou shalt lay thine hand,
And swear, that whilst thou hold'st command supreme
Over the armies of the living God,
Thou never wilt admit into thy peace
The impious race of Amalek."—He said;
The chief approach'd, the solemn vow was pledg'd,
The ministers levitical retir'd,
And evening warn'd the weary host to rest.
  Not so with Korah. Envy knows no rest;
Rebellion will not let the eyelids close
In peaceful slumbers. He had heard the words
Of Moses, and his malice straight devis'd
A specious argument, whereby to build
Treach'rous conclusions on fair-seeming truths:

For there are men so impiously perverse,
They will arraign the providence of God,
When He forbears to punish; when He strikes,
Dispute his justice, and affect to find
In their own hearts more mercy than in Heaven.
  Soon as the morning dawn'd the assembled tribes
Across Rephidim's plain, whence all were fled,
Tow'rds Sinai's desart northward turn'd their course,
When to the son of Peleth in the front
Of Reuben, where he march'd, thus Korah spake—
  " Warrior, you see how fast the nations sink
Before our conqu'ring standard; you have heard
The doom of Amalek, by him pronounc'd,
Who is our Israel's oracle, and seal'd
By Joshua on God's altar with an oath.
Not one must live of Esau's hapless race;
Nor age, nor sex, nor innocence can save,
But e'en the harmless nursling at the breast
Must perish with the mother, dreadful doom!
If this be so as Moses hath decreed,

And general carnage is announc'd from Heav'n,
Where shall we look for mercy? Have these plains
Not drank so deeply of their masters' blood,
But we must drain from infants their small store,
And wring the last faint drop from wrinkled age,
To perfect a libation full and fit—
What shall I say? For God?—No, God forbid!
For Moses, for a plume of deeper dye
To crown the helm of Joshua, and replace
That crest, which Amalek's keen falchion cleft?
The sentence I have heard, but tell me now,
For I am yet to learn, what is the sin
Of this unhappy people: in past time
Jacob did homage to them, brought them gifts,
As to his brethren of the elder stock:
They envied not his store, they had enough,
And but for his entreaty had declin'd
The tributary offerings of his flock:
They were the stronger then; his wives, his babes,
His all was in their pow'r; but they were kind

And merciful, and to our fathers gave
That peace, which to their sons we now deny.
What if the gods they worship be no gods,
They do but follow where their fathers trode,
And what they taught believe; if so they sin,
Then is obedience guilt. Moses to them
Is not a lawgiver, hath not divulg'd,
As unto us, his conference with God
At Horeb's mount; and, if he had, perchance
He might have found them of less easy faith
Than we, the humblest of his subjects, are,
Not daring of ourselves to act, or speak,
Or think but as he wills, who makes revenge
A virtue, and to desolate mankind
A sacrifice acceptable to Heaven—."

Thus spake the glozing hypocrite, and strove
With the vain mock'ry of compassion, feign'd,
Not felt, to varnish o'er his rancour foul.—

" Father, replied the chief, with me and some
Of Reuben's elder tribe, who weigh men's words,

All is not oracle, that Moses speaks.
When cruelty is sanction'd, I must doubt,
If what I'm taught to think that God abhors,
And human reason starts from, can be right;
Therefore my sword shall sleep within its shell,
And Moses must not rail if I refuse
To stab the wretch, that kneels to me for life,
Or mingle blood of babes with mothers' milk,
Although some young idolater may live
To sacrifice to Chemos. If the will
Of God had been to exterminate the race,
His pestilence had swept them from the earth,
And cruelties more dire, than ere disgrac'd
The worshippers of Moloch had been spar'd.
I and my tribe without the barrier stood;
We heard the din of arms, but neither shar'd,
Nor saw the battle. We are not of those,
Whom Moses favours; Joshua hath his heart,
And Judah holds possession of the van.
I saw the corpse of Amalek expos'd

Before the conqu'ror's tent: I envied not
His fame, nor Caleb's, nor the glorious wounds
Of brave Elishama; alike conceal'd
The quarrel and the contest were from me."—
He paus'd; when Korah, eager to secure
A proselyte, so apt to catch the spark
By his imposing sophistry struck out,
And kindle into open discontent,
Thus with fresh spleen resum'd his taunting theme—
" Ambition urges rival states to war;
Men fight for spoil, for plunder, for increase
Of commerce and dominion—These at least
Are motives natural to man, deprav'd
And sensual as he is; but who will say
What by this causeless quarrel we have gain'd?
What we have lost the very dead can tell:
The fathers, husbands, sons, untimely slain,
Over whose graves their weeping relicts mourn,
Now occupy the only tract of soil,
That we have won from Amalek; but we,

Regardless of their sorrows, we pass on
Exulting in our conquest, and erect
An altar to our God, where we should leave
A pile funereal to our slaughter'd friends.
Why do men whet the sword and point the spear,
Reason will ask? Why are there wars on earth?
Experience answers—Evil deeds prevail
Because the world is evil. Tell me then,
If war be evil, is it not a crime
To say, that God, whose goodness none can doubt,
Hath counsell'd against peace? It cannot be.
If Moses be indeed what he affirms,
The shepherd, chosen of the Lord to lead
His flock to pasture in a land, that flows
With milk and honey, should he seek to turn
His lambs to wolves, and fatten them on blood?
The meek should study peace, the godly man
Should conquer by instruction, and the priest
Should consecrate his labours to the good
And welfare of mankind; but now, alas!

When armies, countless as the sand, and war
In all its horrors, are let loose, our tombs
Will be the trophies, by which after-times
Shall trace our progress to the promis'd land."—
  More he had said, for malice without stint
Was in his heart, and venom flow'd as fast
To his oil'd tongue as to the adder's tooth,
But here the traitor paus'd, for now all eyes
Were northward turn'd, where, journeying o'er the waste
From Midian's confines, an extended line
Of pastoral Arabs came with flocks and droves
In peaceful order; upon sight whereof
The army halted, when an aged priest,
The father of his horde, on his meek ass
Rode forth, and gave the greeting of a friend—
  If Moses liv'd, he will'd them to report
That Jethro was his name; that she, who sate
Veil'd on her camel in the rank behind,
Was Zipporah his daughter and the wife,
Whom Moses had espous'd in Midian's land,

When there he sojourn'd, and with her were come
His two sons, anxious to embrace his knees,
And supplicate the blessing, long withheld.
Thus in unstudied phrase, distinct and brief,
The holy stranger to the army's chief
Detail'd his errand; he in courteous sort
Gave him fair welcome, and assurance full
That all to him belonging should be safe:
The females in his train should pass secure
To Moses, station'd in the army's rear:
They need not fear offence by word or look,
For Caleb should escort them—" Is it then
To Joshua I am list'ning, Jethro cried?
Your action marks assent. Now Heav'n be prais'd!
For great, O Joshua, hath been my desire,
That with mine eyes I might behold that face,
Which in my visions I have seen, and heard
Auspicious voices hailing thee by name,
For Israel's glory, the elect of God.
Truly, my son, the Lord hath laid his hand

Upon the goodliest of the sons of men,
And grac'd with beauty what he crowns with fame."—
He said; the modest hero turn'd aside
His eyes in silence, and to Caleb's care
Consign'd the charge of Jethro and his train,
Then bow'd his head in rev'rence, and retir'd.
Slowly they journey'd onwards through the ranks
With eyes uplifted, as if nought could stir
Their curiosity below the clouds;
Solemn, deliberate men—And now the sun
Had dipp'd his golden orb into the west,
When Caleb stopp'd, and thus to Jethro spake—
" Father, 'tis now the hour of evening prayer,
And nearer access may not be allow'd
To those, who form thy train, till that be pass'd;
But thou, whose function is before the Lord,
A priest in Midian, holy and approv'd,
Thou, if it be thy pleasure to alight
From off thy beast, may'st enter and behold
The face of Moses; I the whilst will wait

Here with thy company." This said, the sage
Observant of the word, dismounted straight
And stood; then, lifting up his hands, he cried—
"The Lord be blessed! Let his will be done.
Well hast thou said, my son. My harmless folk
Will not offend against your holy forms."—
When straight the trumpet gave the warning blast,
That now the chaunting of the evening prayer
Was to commence: then came the elders forth
With Moses and with Aaron at their head:
The congregated Levites knelt around,
And loudly thus their solemn pray'r rehears'd.—
"Lord of all mercy, give thy people rest,
And as thy sun now hastens to descend,
So much the rather let thy living light
Shine in our hearts, that we may know thy truth,
Thy pow'r, thy providence and praise thy name.
Send, gracious Lord, thy dew upon the earth
This night, as thou art wont, to be our bread
In this bare wilderness; and as thy food

Sustains our bodies, let our faith in thee
Support our constancy in all attempts
By evil counsels to estrange our minds
From thy pure worship: as thy hand, O Lord,
Hath from the house of bondage led us forth,
So from the various perils of our march,
Whether of thirst, of famine or of foe,
Protect us in thy mercy, and inspire
Thy people's hearts with patience to abide
The fullness of thy time, when of the land,
To our forefathers promis'd, we their sons,
In thee confiding, may at length obtain
Lasting possession, and repose in peace."—
The pray'r was ended; the assembly rose,
And darkness 'gan to steal upon the world:
With folded arms, in meditation deep
Revolving in his thoughts the awful scene,
The priest of Midian stood. Him Moses saw,
And disengaging from the crowd, approach'd—
" Blest of the Lord, my father, may'st thou be,"

The prophet cried, and gave the filial kiss,
And bow'd the head and paid obeisance due.
As from a trance new-waken'd, for a time
In solemn silence Jethro stood, and gaz'd
Upon the alter'd features of the seer,
Time-stricken now, and yet more deeply mark'd
With cares and weary watchings; when at length—
"All hail, my son!" the aged hierarch cried,
And spread his arms, and press'd him to his heart,
And wept upon his neck—"Father, forbear!
Moses replied; alas! thou hast endur'd
A tedious pilgrimage to see the wreck
Of a storm-beaten vessel, and thine age,
Like my exhausted strength, must need repose.
Behold the tent; and lo! where Caleb comes
With those, whom God hath giv'n me, and thy care
Hath foster'd in my absence: scenes like these,
Which call the feelings up, should be reserv'd
For sacred privacy, and well I know
In Midian your propriety forbids

The eye of man to rest upon the face
Of the unveiled matron: enter then
Thou and thy welcome charge! Here we may trust
The heart to its affections, and exchange
Those mutual fond enquiries, that to friends
Long parted in such numbers will occur."—
No more, for now with Zipporah and her sons,
Gershom and Eliézer Caleb came,
And to the hand of Moses, who had stopp'd
In the tent-door, resign'd them and withdrew.
After due time for nature to express
Those soft emotions, which the joyful sight
Of objects so belov'd might well inspire,
Jethro, who saw that time and place were fit
To tell the purpose of his coming, now,
When all were seated, thus to Moses spake—
" When to my ear the wond'rous tidings came
Of what had pass'd in Egypt, where the Lord,
For ever blessed be His name! had arm'd
Thy hand with pow'r miraculous to strike

The harden'd heart of Pharaoh, and redeem
From long captivity in Goshen's land
His chosen tribes, conviction smote my mind,
That 'twas indeed the voice of God Himself,
Which call'd to thee from Horeb to come forth,
And leave all lesser duties to perform,
As at this day, thy heav'n-appointed task.
At once I saw thee resolute to slight
The trust of all my store, and break those ties,
Which nature sanctions and thy vows had pledg'd.
If then I held thee in respect less kind
Than I were wont to do, impute it not:
A father's feelings plead in my excuse;
Thy wife, thy children in my hands were left:
It seem'd to me as if thou wert possest
With thoughts beyond thyself. Tears could not move,
Nor intercessions stay thee. Thou hadst heard
A voice; but when I urg'd thee to reveal
What wond'rous thing thou had'st in charge to do,
Thou said'st it was a secret betwixt Heav'n

And thine own heart, and pray'd me to desist:
I ceas'd, I yielded; for I fear'd the Lord.
Zipporah can witness for me if thenceforth
My lips e'er utter'd murmur or reproach;
No, Heav'n be prais'd, though all to me was dark,
Patient I waited till the light broke forth:
Then came the wond'rous embryo to the birth,
Then Egypt witness'd those portentous plagues,
That smote her cities, palaces and fields,
Made the air deadly and the noon-day dark,
Till suffering Nature could endure no more,
But shrieking out with all a mother's pangs,
Prevail'd to save a remnant of her sons,
And stay the scourge of thy wide-wasting rod.
Then, then I knew no mortal of himself
Could do the mighty things that thou had'st done:
Strictly I search'd my heart if ever doubt
Had left a guilty recollection there,
And humbly pray'd forgiveness. Thus confirm'd,
Behold I come to manifest my faith

In thy divine legation, and to hail
Thine Israel, emergent from the waves,
Under the fiery ensign of the Lord
Marching triumphant o'er this wilderness
To its predestin'd portion in the land,
Where God's high temple on His mount shall rise,
And His great name be sounded through the world."—
  Thus spake the priest of Midian, whilst his voice
Swell'd to prophetic rapture, as the scene
Of future glories dawn'd upon his sight;
When thus with mild composure Moses spake—
  " Rightly you judge that nature never bred,
Nor learning foster'd, attributes in man,
That might achieve those wonders, which surpass
All pow'r but of the Lord. Me you have known
The keeper of your flock, an exil'd man,
And to my proper nation hardly known:
I eat your bread, and gave, 'twas all I could—
My daily labour: when I took to wife
Your daughter, no inheritance had I:

Friendless, the wide world had not where for me,
Save by your charity, to rest my head.
No grace had I, no hope of better days
Gleam'd in my view. Ambition builds her nest
In souls of lofty pitch, whence she may launch
Her flight high-soaring and attempt the clouds.
It was not so with me; my lowly thoughts
Ne'er reach'd above the shepherd's simple life:
The desart was my lot; thy flock my care,
And leading them to pasture at the foot
Of Horeb's mount, there was I found of God,
Who by the meanness of his agent marks
His acts how mighty. From a cloud He spake,
And gave commandment: in a cloud we came,
Marshall'd by miracles, from Goshen's land.
Through the Red Sea we march'd; Pharaoh pursued,
And perish'd in the gulph: by God's command
O'er the uplifted waves I stretch'd my rod,
And they fell down; we stood and view'd the wreck.
Over the sandy waste we held our way;

The people thirsted where no water was;
God heard their cry and gave them their desire:
They hunger'd, and their stores of food were spent,
The Lord had pity, and the dews of Heaven
Are to this hour all Israel's daily bread:
We cross'd Rephidim's plain; nor man, nor beast,
Nor e'en the trodden sand, o'er which we pass'd,
Had harm or wrong of us: with furious threats
The tyrants of the soil oppos'd our march,
And Amalek drew all his warriors forth:
On their fleet coursers with the whirlwind's speed
Their thund'ring squadrons rush'd upon our host:
We fought, we conquer'd, for the Lord was with us,
And to the unflesht sword of Joshua gave
The triumph of that day: their monarch slain,
Their barbarous hordes dispers'd, and all the tract
'Twixt this and Midian clear, secure you pass
Their hostile borders, and we meet in peace."—
"Then is the day of vengeance come at last,
And blest for evermore be Israel's God,

Jethro replied, for He hath giv'n us rest
From these idolaters, than whom the earth,
Fertile in monsters, doth not aught contain
So savage, so athirst for human blood.
At length their horrid blasphemies are heard,
At length their impious orgies and the yells
Of their infuriate zealots have call'd down
The long-suspended judgment. If to them
Mercy had been continued, we had heard
Impious opinions spread about the world,
And boldly vouch'd, that man could not offend,
That murder, spoil and rapine were no crimes,
And Chemos had the earth at his command.
But Israel's God, who is the Lord of Hosts,
Hath drawn His armies forth, and put the sword
Of heav'nly justice in the hand of man.
No creature, that had life, might pass their haunts:
All nature was their prey; on every hill,
In every hollow of the earth they couch'd;
Their scent was as the vulture's keen for blood,

Swift as the eagle's flight was their pursuit,
They sprung as doth the lion, and their cry
Was horrid as the gaunt hyæna's howl:
About their altars the blood-sprinkled ground
Shew'd like a charnel-house, with ghastly bones,
The reliques of their impious offerings, strewn;
And who but must adore the righteous doom
Of an avenging God, when He expels
Monsters like these from the affrighted earth?"—
Here as he paus'd, an intervening sigh
Burst from the bosom of the conscious seer,
Who knew how deep conspiracy had work'd
Into the hearts of some, and mourn'd the doom,
Impendent on their guilt—" Father, he cried,
You are a priest in Midian, and the life
Your peaceful people pass amongst their flocks,
Inspires simplicity: they have not learnt
The sophistry of Egypt, have not dwelt
In Goshen's land, environ'd with a swarm
Of brute divinities, who haunt the stream,

Or graze the banks of Nile: you love your God,
Revere His judgments and observe His laws:
Alas! for Israel: 'tis not so with them;
And Heav'n have mercy upon me your son,
Who am at once the servant of the Lord,
And yet in pity intercede for those,
Of whose sins, when I cease to be the judge,
I am partaker in the sight of Heaven.
Wonder not then, if when you bring before me
These soft affinities of wife and sons,
My heart preoccupied can find no room
To entertain one joy, that might allay
The pressure of the burden that I bear.
The bread, that you have brought, must be your food;
Our manna is the Lord's: to you and these
This tent will be for rest. I must away;
My calls are from without. I shall forbid
To-morrow's march, and give the host repose:
The third day we must reassume our toil,
And you must part—Ah Zipporah! Ah my sons!

Me miserable! never will the hours return,
That we have known in Midian. Pisgah's mount
Bounds my horison: there at once I see
The rising and the setting of my sun."—
He said, and parted. The prophetic words
Sunk to the heart of Zipporah; she sigh'd,
And, whilst the tear hung on her faded cheek,
She smote her hands and mournfully exclaim'd—
"It is God's will, and let His will be done—!"
When thus the father—"Be content, my child.
Though dead to thee thy husband, to the Lord
He lives, and is His servant. Now no more!
Get thee to rest. I shall walk forth a space,
And in the contemplation of His works
Visit the Lord in spirit: it may be,
He shall inform me of His gracious will,
That when to-morrow Moses shall require
That I address the people, I may speak,
The words, that God shall put into my heart,
And before Israel glorify his name."

Now Night her star-bespangled zone had spread
Over Heav'n's vault, when Moses sought the tent
Of Korah, for he knew his rash discourse
With Peleth's son, and trembled for his fate.
There, by the light of one pale glimm'ring lamp,
Sullen and sad the musing traitor sate:
His patient consort, silent and apart,
Watch'd him with fearful look, whilst at her feet
Two infant boys play'd on the matted floor.
At sight of Moses the aw'd matron rose—
"Not so, he cried; arise not from your seat,
Nor let these innocents be robb'd of sleep."—
Surpris'd and conscience-stricken Korah sprung
Upon his feet, and eagerly exclaim'd—
"Why art thou come? What vengeance to denounce
On me, on her and these devoted babes,
Who are thy kindred, but not thou their friend."—
"You wrong me, Korah; I am much their friend,
In accent mild and by his taunts unmov'd,
Moses replied. Behold, once more I come

For the last time to warn you of your doom.
You have arraign'd the judgments of the Lord,
And talk'd of Amalek, as if the wrath,
Which is denounc'd on his blaspheming race,
Were not of them deserv'd. If in your heart
There be so much compassion for the sinful,
Why not for these your infants and your wife,
Who have not sinn'd, and yet must share your doom,
When ruin falls upon you? 'Tis not well,
That thus you tempt the vengeance of your God.
Am I not then your friend, your children's friend,
The friend of all that's dear to you, when thus,
Planting myself betwixt Heav'n's wrath and you,
I warn you to repent?"—"I do repent,
Korah indignant cried, of many a fault,
To which, by weak credulity betray'd,
I now look back with shame: I do repent
That ever I was dup'd by flattering hopes
To dream of freedom in some happier clime,
And wander forth with these from Goshen's land

To perish in the wilderness: of this
I from my heart repent; but when I hear
Unsparing vengeance vow'd, and the decree
Ascrib'd to God all-merciful, if then
I hold the vouch'd authority in doubt,
Of that, O Moses, I do not repent."—
To him the prophet—" Since thou wilt persist
Thus to uphold thy judgment, the appeal
Must be referr'd to God. If I have dar'd
To falsify his mandate, and denounce
Vengeance unauthoriz'd upon the race
Of Amalek, let Israel take up stones,
And be your hand the first to hurl them on me:
And now tow'rds Sinai we direct our march;
There on His holy mount if God shall deign
After some wond'rous manner to come down,
And manifest to all that I am His,
And speak by His commandment, then beware
How you provoke rebellion in His host,
Defame His servant and dispute His laws;

For know, obdurate man, I cannot then
Presume, as now, to intercede with God
Longer to stay His vengeance from a wretch,
Who braves destruction and defies his judge."—
  Thus as he spake in deep and awful tone,
His voice, as with a solemn horror, shook;
Whilst on the mother and her sleeping babes
He cast a look so mournful, that her soul
Sunk in despair, and when he turn'd to part,
She felt as if forsaken of all hope,
And would have knelt to stay him, had not then
The eye of her stern husband glanc'd upon her,
And look'd her motionless—Alas for thee,
Sad mother! who, that has a heart, and reads
Thy piteous story, can refuse a tear,
Although we trust, when Innocence went down,
And the earth shut her mouth upon thy babes,
That, whilst they shar'd a guilty father's doom,
For them there yet was mercy in the pit?
  Now dawn'd the day, when from his humble couch

The priest of Midian rose, and tow'rds the east
Look'd forth to hail the blest return of light,
And chaunt his early oraisons, when lo!
In the mid space before his tent he spied
An altar by the Levites rais'd of stones
Rude and unfashion'd by the mason's tool;
And there intent upon the work, behold,
Moses and Aaron stood: them to accost,
And pay his homage to the God he serv'd,
Rob'd in appropriate vesture, as beseem'd
His sacerdotal function, forth he came;
When Aaron thus—"To thee our honour'd guest,
Right holy and approv'd, your kindred we,
The sons of Jacob, consecrate this pile,
As a memorial of your visit paid
Here in the wilderness to us your friends.
And now behold, our offerings are prepar'd,
And solemn intercession will be made
To grant thee safe return and peaceful days
In Midian, where thou dwell'st before the Lord.

These ceremonies ended, we expect
That to the congregation thou wilt speak
What to thy judgment and the sapient grace,
In which we know thee gifted, may seem meet
For our instruction, and the general good
Of all this people, who attend to hear."—
He said; devout and silent Jethro heard,
And on his forehead humbly press'd his hand,
And bow'd obeisant, marking his assent.
When pray'r was ended, and the people stood
In silent expectation, Aaron turn'd
To the sage Midianite, and led him forth,
Where from the altar step he might be seen
And heard of the assembly; when at once,
As if with sudden inspiration fill'd,
His head uncover'd and his silv'ry locks
Loose and surrender'd to the passing breeze,
He spread his arms, and rais'd his eyes to Heav'n,
And thus in tone declamatory spake—
" Heaven is my witness how it glads my heart,

Ye men of Israel, to perceive this day,
God, ever merciful to Abraham's seed,
And mindful of His word, hath brought you out
From your Egyptian bondage in his cloud,
With signs and wonders, which your eyes beheld
Wrought by his servant Moses for your sakes.
Therefore across the wilderness I come,
And here in presence of you all I stand
Before the altar of the living God,
Whose priest I am, to witness this great thing,
Which He hath thus begun, and will complete,
If ye continue faithful. Oh! ye sons
Of holy Jacob, when ye saw and pass'd
Th' uplifted waters, did ye not confess
Your God was God indeed? Could ye then doubt
If Egypt's idol gods were vain to save,
When Pharaoh sunk with all his host, and you
Look'd on, and saw him perish in the waves?
What is there more that ye can ask of Heav'n?
What other demonstration can ye need,

Where all is miracle, to fix your faith?
Nature would sentence you to starve for want
In this bare wilderness, and die with thirst;
What is it but a miracle to feed
On dew that drops from Heav'n, and drink your fill
From the hard flint, rod-stricken by the hand
Of him, who is the chosen of the Lord
For your salvation? Can ye doubt if God
Speak in his voice, who with a word controls
The elements, puts Nature from her course,
Makes the rock water and the waters rock,
And does those things, which since the world had birth
No man of woman born e'er saw or did?
Sons of the promise, sanctify your hearts!
Let me not plead against your unbelief,
And call upon the mount, whence Moses came,
To utter 'midst severer fires a voice,
Denouncing your rebellion. Hath the Lord
Struck down the foe of you and all mankind,
And is there present one, who rashly dares

To murmur at the judgment, and affect
To mourn for Amalek? If such there be,
Let him stand forward; for to him I say,
God in his mercy never freed the earth
From pest more terrible: if pity spring
So quick into his heart, let him direct
Its stream to those, who can produce their claim;
Amongst the rest to me—My flocks, my herds,
My unoffending people were the prey
Of this unsparing tyrant, who ne'er felt
One touch of pity for his fellow men;
And who shall feel for Amalek? Away!
Hence with such gross dissembling! Mark that man,
And purge your congregation from his stain.
Now may the Lord direct you on your way,
And bring you to His promis'd land in peace!
Back to my native Midian, whence I came,
My weary steps I must retrace—Alas!
This wilderness is no abiding place
For the soft charities of wife and sons:

Nor they, nor I shall e'er again behold
The face of Moses—Servant of the Lord
He must at once dismiss all earthly cares,
And dedicate his heart to Heav'n and you.
Therefore let him, who doubts his truth, beware,
Lest when he sees the Lord, and hears His voice
Unfolding the great pandect of His laws,
Struck by the dread conviction, he may find
The irreversible decree is past,
And miserably perish. Oh ye tribes,
Elect, if faithful! put your trust in God,
And honour His meek prophet, who is sent
For their deliverance, who receive his words;
For their assur'd destruction, who reject.
Thus far the light is with me—I have said.
The rest is darkness."—At the word he ceas'd,
And bow'd his head, and once more rais'd his hands,
And bless'd the people: they with reverence due
Paid low obeisance, whilst the choral priests
Sung their loud hallelujahs to the Lord.

This done, the people to their tents retir'd;
The sun was sunk, and rest-restoring Night
Spread her soft mantle o'er the silent camp.
The pale moon, wand'ring through the vault of Heav'n,
At length withdrew her interlucent lamp,
When Moses, who with clearer prescience saw
The awful revelation, whose approach
Jethro, though somewhat darkly, had announc'd,
Rose with the dawn, and to the pious sage,
Now on the point to leave him, thus he spake—
" Much is my soul disquieted, that you,
My benefactor, father and my friend,
With these my earthly blessings must depart;
Whilst I your son, who scarce have found an hour
For a short welcome, now alas! must take
A long, a sad farewel. What shall I say?
If God hath call'd me forth to Sinai's mount,
There to receive His laws, must I complain,
And call His service hard? That were to sin:
That be far from me."—" In the name of God

Go forth, my son, the aged priest replied,
And strain'd him to his breast. Your wife and sons
Shall be my care, and, if the Lord permit,
We meet again; if not, His will be done!
And hark! the trumpet calls thee. Judah's van
Is on the march; behold, my peaceful horde
Trail their long line slow-pac'd athwart the plain:
See, Zipporah waves her hand! It must be so:
Take then my last embrace, and in your prayers
Remember Midian."—More had he essay'd
To speak, his voice had fail'd. His patient beast
Stoop'd to receive her venerable load,
And on he pass'd. With pensive looks awhile
Moses pursu'd his track, then turn'd aside
And join'd the train, that follow'd Joseph's corpse.
When after toilsome march the weary tribes
To Sinai's wilderness had now arriv'd;
Moses, who by the spirit had been warn'd
There to expect the coming of the Lord,
Before the mountain bade his camp be spread,

And thus to Joshua spake—" Here rest awhile,
And to the several leaders of the host,
Captains of thousands, hundreds and of tens,
Give order that no human foot shall pass
The circumvallant line, that bounds the camp.
Let every soldier see his garment cleans'd
From soil of travel, or the stain of blood
Spilt in the battle, and when evening prayer
Is ended, and the trumpet warns to rest,
Let all in silence to their tents withdraw,
And there solicit sleep ; no council hold,
Nor talk prolong over the nightly lamp ;
For other light than that of yonder moon,
Renascent in her orbit, none must be.
Now God be with thee ! Hence, and see it done !"—
No more. The chief assenting bow'd his head ;
The prophet in the spirit tow'rds the mount
In awful expectation turn'd his steps.
Thither he came, and at the rocky base
Stopt, and shook off the sandals from his feet,

Then kneeling thus preferr'd his humble suit—
" Lord, if it be thy token, which I feel
Now at my conscious heart, behold me here,
Thy soul-devoted servant, to receive,
And by thy gracious furtherance to perform,
What for thy people Israel here encamp'd
Thy wisdom may ordain."—This said, he wrapt
His mantle o'er his face, and on the rock
Prostrate awaited if perchance the Lord
Might speak as heretofore; when soon was heard
A voice, thus answering awfully distinct—
" Arise, and say to Israel—Ye have seen
What I have done to Pharaoh and his host,
And how I bear you upon eagle's wings,
And brought you to myself. Now if indeed
Ye will obey my voice, and sacred keep
My covenant, a kingdom ye shall be
Of priests, a holy nation, a reserve
Peculiar, and of Me in favour held
Above all people, that inhabit earth;

For all that earth is mine. These are My words:
Mark them, for these to Israel thou shalt speak."—
The voice now ceas'd; the heav'n-commission'd seer,
Charg'd with the gracious oracle, conven'd
The elders of the people, and rehears'd,
Grave and correct, in their attentive ears
The words, which he had heard. They, much amaz'd,
With one voice answer'd—" Should it please the Lord
Again to commune with thee from the mount,
Say, that His grateful people have receiv'd
The wond'rous promulgation, and declare,
That His most holy will shall be their law,
And all that He commands them they will do."—
" 'Tis well, the prophet cried, this fit reply
Beseemeth you to make and me to bear
To that almighty Pow'r, whose promis'd love
Your strict and prompt obedience will ensure."—
This said, he parted, and without delay
By the pale moon-beam at the mountain's foot
Unsandall'd stood, and, ere he bent the knee,

Look'd up, and lo! a thick and murky cloud
Hung hovering o'er the top. Again broke forth
The awful voice; again the prophet veil'd
His face and lowly knelt; when thus the Lord—
"Behold, encanopied in clouds I come,
That, when I speak, the congregated tribes
May hear my voice, and of thy truth assur'd,
May know thee for my servant, and henceforth
For evermore believe thee. Hie thee hence
Unto the people; sanctify their hearts,
And let them wash their garments, and be clean
Against the third day; for in that same day
In sight of all the host I will come down
Upon Mount Sinai, round whose hallow'd base
Thou shalt set bounds, and proclamation make
To all the people, that they take good heed
How they approach, or rashly tempt the mount;
For he, that tempteth it, shall surely die.—
When thou shalt hear the cornet sounding long,
Then may the tribes draw near unto the mount."—

The mandate thus deliver'd, Moses sought
The camp, and all, that was enjoin'd him, told,
Warning the people to reserve themselves
Pure and expectant to behold the Lord
On the third day. To the minutest word
The strict command was fearfully obey'd;
When at the dawn of that important day
Anxious the people rose, and whilst all eyes
Were fixt upon the east, where Sinai's mount
Steep and yet dark in the horizon stood,
In fiery streams from forth the thund'ring clouds
The flashing light'nings burst, the mountain quak'd,
And the whole vault of Heav'n was wrapt in flame.
Then was the terror, then all Israel hid
Their faces, and the boldest of the host
Shook in their mailed habergeons for fear,
And trembling stood aloof. Still blaz'd the mount,
And loud the elemental roar was heard
In bursts, that seem'd to shake the pillar'd earth.
Then Korah shrunk into his inmost tent,

And would have knelt to Moses, if no eye
Might witness his submission: then a cry
Ran through the multitude—" Have mercy, Lord!
Not in thy terror, Lord, break forth upon us,
But spare thy people!"—This when Moses heard,
From forth the camp he came, and cross'd the bound,
And to the interdicted mountain's foot,
So privileg'd of God, unharm'd approach'd:
Then ceas'd the lightnings, then the air was still,
And the quell'd thunder died upon the ear.
And now the cornet, sounding long and loud,
Gave signal to the people to come forth:
Withdrawn they stood beside the nether part
Of the envelop'd mount, that to the clouds
Smok'd like a furnace: all the while the sound
Of the loud cornet echo'd through the air,
Till Moses spake, and to the mount call'd up
To meet the Lord, this gracious charge receiv'd—
" Go down unto the people, and give heed
Lest they break in to gaze upon the Lord,

And many of them perish. Let the priests,
Who sanctify themselves, come near, but none,
Save thee and Aaron, may ascend the mount."—
Thus to His servant Moses spake the Lord
From out the cloud, whilst all the people stood
Silent, aghast and trembling for the fate
Of their great prophet, now no more in sight,
Lost in the bright effulgence. He the whilst
In his mysterious conference receiv'd
Those statutes, by supernal wisdom fram'd,
The dictates of Jehovah, which have stood
Through the long lapse of ages, and shall stand
Through ages yet to come. His gracious work
Of heav'nly legislation thus perform'd,
God from the mount ascended, and the fires,
That kindled at his presence, were withdrawn;
The cloud dispers'd, and now upon the top
Of Sinai's mount oracular was seen
The white-rob'd prophet—Joyful was the sight,
And all the people cried—"The Lord be prais'd!

The hope of Israel lives! Now, now we see,
We know him for the chosen of the Lord"—
He the meanwhile with solemn step came down,
Bearing the sacred code, and from the rock
Above the multitude outspread below
His great commission thus aloud proclaim'd—
" Hear, Israel, hear! The Lord your God this day
Hath made of you a nation, and I come
To stablish His commandments. Thus He speaks;
These are the words of your enacting God,
And these the sacred duties He ordains;
Mark them, digest them, write them on your hearts!
' I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out,
And from the house of bondage set thee free:
Other than Me no God shalt thou confess.'
' Thou shalt not grave an image to thyself,
In form and fashion like to aught thou see'st
In Heav'n above, or in the earth beneath,
Or in the watery depths below the earth.
To these thou shalt not bow thyself, nor make

The work of thine own hands to be a god:
For I the Lord am jealous, and my wrath
To third and fourth descendants will pursue
Apostasy paternal; but of those,
Who love and serve me, thousands shall receive
My mercy for the righteous father's sake.'
'Take not God's name in vain; for if thou dost,
Thy God will not acquit thee of the guilt.'
'Hallow the sabbath! Six days shall be thine
To do thy work; the sabbath is the Lord's.
Rest thou in that from labour: let thy son,
Thy daughter, thy domestic and thy guest,
Stranger although he be, rest on that day;
Nay, e'en thy cattle shall abstain from work:
For in six days the world's great Founder built
Heav'n's starry arch, the solid earth, and spread
The circling seas, with all that they contain;
Then made the seventh day His day of rest,
A holy sabbath, blessed of the Lord.'
'Father and mother, (for of them thou art)

See that thou hold'st in honour, so will God
Give length of days to thee in Canaan's land.'
' From murder, from adultery, from theft
Be diligent to keep thy conscience free.'
' Bear not false witness in thy neighbour's wrong.'
' Let not thine heart covet thy neighbour's house,
His wife, his servant, whether man or maid,
His ox, his ass, or aught thy neighbour hath.'—
Let these commandments be to thee a law
Holy for ever, and transgress them not!"
Ah hapless Israel! blessed had'st thou been,
And above all the unenlighten'd world
Glorious in knowledge, had'st thou wisely kept
Pure and inviolate these sacred proofs
Of one eternal, immaterial God,
To thee alone reveal'd from Sinai's mount.
Thou wert God's nation, and He was thy king:
Why art thou now rejected and dispers'd
Through every quarter of the peopled earth?—
Because thou gav'st thyself to human kings,

And they gave thee to less than human gods,
To lifeless stocks and stones. Did'st thou not then,
Or ere Mount Sinai's fulminating top
Had ceas'd to glow with those seraphic fires,
That veil'd the face of thy descending God,
Did'st thou not even then revolt, and kneel
To the brute image of a molten calf?
What likeness saw'st thou of the living God,
That thou should'st pay it worship, and provoke
The meekest of mankind to dash to earth,
And in an angry moment to destroy,
The work of forty days, the sacred laws
On stony tablets grav'd by God Himself?
What ail'd thee, Aaron, to forget the Lord?
What, Miriam, thee—a leper white as snow?
Why burn'd the fires at Taberah? Why died,
Unmourn'd of Israel, Aaron's priestly sons?
Greatly, oh wretched people, have ye sinn'd,
And sore aggriev'd the spirit of your God;
But forasmuch as faithfully ye kept

The wond'rous annals, which that Book divine
From the first birth of nature through the chain
Of your eventful history unfolds,
More grateful thanks from the whole Christian world,
And milder treatment than ye have receiv'd,
Justly ye merit; for to you we owe
Discoveries, which no human thought had reach'd,
And only inspiration could supply.
Therefore we know that for the remnant left
God will provide, and, though for ages past
Ye have been wand'rers, will in his good time
Gather your scatter'd flock into His fold.

END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

ARGUMENT.

THE Israelites, warned by the rising of the cloud from over the tabernacle, march to Kadesh-barnea—The People become impatient to attempt the conquest of the promised land, and break into mutiny—Moses addresses them, and Korah undertakes to answer him—Finding himself deserted by the seditious, he departs in despair—The twelve spies are elected—Joshua confers with Caleb upon the choice of the ten, who are named by the Tribes—Korah betakes himself to the desart—Invokes the evil spirit, who appears to him—Kneels and makes his vow before the altar of Chemos—Is transported to his tent—His horrors upon waking are described—The book concludes.

THE EXODIAD.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

NOW from the hallow'd and unseen recess
Of Sinai's mount oracular when God
Had dictated His statutes, and restor'd
The fractur'd tablets perfect and entire
To His commission'd prophet, time was come
For Israel to receive the scriptur'd code,
And bear it in the consecrated ark,
Led by his cloud to Canaan's destin'd land.
Yet some there were still obstinate of heart
Against conviction evident to sense;

These miserably perish'd : others err'd ;
But they by timely penitence were sav'd,
And Moses, ever prone to intercede,
Further'd their suit for pardon. Strange it is,
That any should have waver'd in their faith,
When God by revelation so express,
And signs and wonders in their sight display'd,
Attested His omnipotence ; but they,
Faithful historians of their own disgrace,
Have pass'd the self-accusing records down
Through ages incorrupt, and we who read
Their sacred volume, wonder and believe.
Now when the servant of the Lord foresaw
The day appointed to renew his march,
Thus to the leader of the host he spake.
" Joshua, my son, your constancy and truth
Are known to God ; for you have faithful been,
When some, the nearest to my heart, fell off,
And Aaron vex'd the Lord, and Miriam sinn'd.
Of Nadab and Abihu, who presum'd

To offer fires unhallow'd, you have seen
The righteous doom, and when destructive plagues
Ravag'd the outskirts of the tainted camp,
You kept the strength of Judah undefil'd.
Know then to Kadesh we direct our march;
Therefore be ready ere to-morrow's sun
Break from the golden chambers of the east,
To form your martial phalanx in array;
And when upon the confines of the land,
Whither we journey, you shall plant your camp;
I can foresee that evil minds will there
Find readier opportunities to plot
And hatch new troubles; for though Korah shrinks
Whilst the Lord's thunder rolls from Sinai's mount,
When the storm ceases, and the sky is clear,
The sun-invited serpent will crawl forth,
And 'twill behove us then to tread with care
And guard our steps against the lurking foe.
Of this no more; for lo! the night draws on,
And thou hast need of rest. Paleness still sits

Upon thy cheek, my son! Hence to thy tent:
When actions speak, professions may be spar'd."—
He said; and as he press'd the hero's hand,
Farewell, he cried; favour'd of Heav'n thou art,
And sure I am, the Lord, for Israel's sake,
Will send His angel down to guard thy couch
By night, and bear thee on his wings by day."—
Fair shew'd the morn: already Sinai's brow
The sun's first horizontal rays illum'd,
When, with a blast that made its high tops ring,
The watchful Levites with their silver tubes
Proclaim'd the rise of the mysterious cloud,
Which veil'd the sacred tabernacle; straight
From every quarter of the crowded camp,
This miracle stupendous to behold,
Forth rusht the multitude. High pois'd in air
The vap'rous column hung; then through the ranks
Of Judah's van loud was th' exulting cry,
"Lo where the signal of Jehovah flies!
THE LORD OUR BANNER points to Canaan's land,

His cloudy herald marshals us to arms.
Tremble, ye nations! In His strength we come."
When Aaron and his sons, to whom alone
Intrusted was the mystic ark of God,
Had veil'd their sacred charge, and brought it forth,
At sight thereof the trumpet call'd to march,
And onward mov'd the well-compacted host.
Then Judah, cover'd by the associate tribes
Of Zebulun and Issachar, unfurl'd
His lion-standard, signal to the host.
Them follow'd Gershon's and Merari's sons;
Their's was the tabernacle's sacred charge.
Next came the warriors of the first born tribe,
With Gad and Simeon; after whom the sons
Of Kohath bore the sanctuary of God:
Last on the march, but not in trust the least
Or valour's proof, the multitude of Dan
With Ephraim and Manasseh clos'd the rear.
Before them went the cloud; they saw and hail'd
This evidence of Heav'n's protecting care,

And follow'd where the guiding portent led.
With eyes uplifted Moses watch'd the cloud,
And through its changes trac'd the hand of God,
And where His finger pointed shap'd his course:
Northward it still advanc'd and led them on
To further Kadesh over Pharan's wild;
Here vibrating in air awhile it hung,
Then sunk, denoting that their march must cease.
  Here while they tarried, oft with anxious eye
On the long range of Edom's hills they gaz'd,
Which to the north of their encampment rose
In towering heaps, a barrier rude and wild
To Canaan's land, their long-expected seat.
Unseen was all beyond, but fancy still,
(Then most creative where no models are,
From which to picture her ideal scenes)
Pour'd on their mental eye a wild display
Of rich allurements; wealth by others stor'd,
And cities, where to dwell, by others built;
Fields, that no toil demanded, flocks and herds

Grazing the banks of rivers clear and full
As the capacious Nile, inspiring hopes
Of lasting plenty and long years of peace.
Thus, whilst by Hope's anticipation mockt,
Their fancy gloated on these shadowy scenes,
Deckt out in all Imagination's pomp,
Loudly they call'd on Moses and the chiefs
To lead them on to glory and success.
No heed gave they to any, that oppos'd
Doubts of accomplishing their wish'd attempt:
The Lord was with them: Canaan was their own;
Soon as their conqu'ring banners should be seen
On the hill tops, the kingdoms of the plain
Should vanish, and be scatter'd like the dust.
Of Korah and his councils their contempt
Broke forth in bitterest taunts. What murmurs now,
What plea could he devise to damp their zeal?
Famine and thirst and sickness and the sword,
Nature herself was conquer'd. They were now
God's people, and His cloud-conducted host

Stood on the confines of the promis'd land;
And when Arabia's king with all his hordes,
(Warriors, that kept the desart in dismay,)
Could not withstand a fragment of their strength,
What had the whole to fear from Edom's sons,
A weak, emasculate, voluptuous race?
" Let us ascend, they cried, the barrier heights;
There on his rocky throne while Moses sits,
And lifts his hands in pray'r, we from the hills,
Like eagles from their airy, shall come down,
Led to the fight, and with the hostile blood
Of these idolaters, proscrib'd by Heav'n,
Deluge the plains below."—Thus whilst they gave
Their vaunting tongues the rein, and loudly talk'd,
Korah and his associates, in whose hearts
Rankled revenge and malice, now discern'd,
How by adoption of their eager zeal,
And urging them to mutinous contempt
Of all, who counsell'd wisely, they might screw
Their passions to Rebellion's fav'rite pitch,

And shake those powers they labour'd to subvert.
As when across some river's rapid course
A massy fragment falling choaks its bed,
The angry stream, disdainful of restraint,
Breaks through its yielding banks, and o'er the plain
Rushing resistless, a new channel forms
To bear its ample volume to the deep;
So, to new projects turn'd, the rebel crew
Of Korah now were loudest in the cry
For instant action, spurning with disdain
Their coward policy, who would oppose
The glorious impulse, that insur'd success.
Would Moses say the moment was not ripe
For victory, when every heart beat high,
And panted to engage? Would he now halt
And hover on the frontiers of the land,
Till the alarm was spread, and time allow'd
For every city to repair its walls,
And arm for its defence? Was there a man
From Joshua downwards to the meanest hind,

That carried burdens in the army's rear,
Who would not stamp that dalliance with contempt?
If Moses would not hear their just appeal,
And Joshua scrupled to unsheath his sword,
'Twere time for Israel to assert the rights
Of choice and freedom, and when they, who rul'd
The wills of others, rul'd not for their good,
'Twas then that reason justified revolt.
As when, at morning, in some wood's recess
A houseless traveller unnotic'd leaves
The smother'd relics of the fire, at which
O'er night his scanty pittance he had warm'd;
If then, forth bursting from their caves remote,
Contending winds with raging fury blow,
The half-extinguisht sparks revive, and far
Dispers'd around, in every bush and brake
New fuel finding, spread devouring flames;
Not with less fatal speed through Israel's tribes
Ran the vile taunts of Korah, till the crowd
Warp'd by his foul devices, madd'ning rusht

From every quarter, and approach'd the tent,
Where Moses, circled by the princes, sate
In consultation grave. Loud was the cry,
And every voice was urgent to demand
Immediate seizure of the promis'd spoil,
So tempting to their hopes. Indignant rose
The warrior chiefs, and half unsheath'd their swords,
Till Moses stay'd their anger, and unaw'd
With calm composure from the tent went forth—
" What would ye, movers of revolt," he cried ?
And, as he spake, so bright his visage shone,
That from his presence instantly they shrunk,
As from the radiance of the glorious sun
Fly the dark shadows of retiring night.
Still'd were their clamours; in attention deep
They stood, whilst with an air of high command,
Advancing to their front, the prophet spake—
" Is this the duty that ye owe to God,
And thus do ye fulfil His sacred laws ?
What means this tumult ? Wherefore do ye thus

Disturb our serious councils, and provoke
The anger of the Lord, which well ye know,
If once let loose, is a consuming fire?
Some traitor to your peace hath taught you this;
This is the work of some insidious wretch,
Who first enslaves your reason, and then seeks
To shift destruction from himself to you.
Where is amongst you that presumptuous man,
Who dares to set against the will of Heav'n
His arrogant decree? Let him stand forth!
He, who defies th' Omnipotent, may well
Meet face to face the mortal, and avow
The bold determin'd purpose of his soul.
But this hath guilt peculiar to itself,
This is mean malice, this is the device
Of the assassin, who conceals the knife,
And shrouds himself in darkness, on the watch
When to forsake his hiding place, and deal
Unguarded honesty the fatal blow.
Nor am I, sons of Israel, yet to learn

Who are the movers of your mad revolt.
Bring not your idle murmurs to my ears
But send your masters hither. Hence, away!
Remember the great mercies of your God,
Revere His justice, tremble at His power,
Break from the chains of error, and repair
By penitent submission your offence."
Here Moses ceas'd, when Korah from the crowd
Advancing, thus with studied turn of speech
The temporizing orator replied—
" If zeal for Israel's glory be a crime,
You have my free confession that my thoughts
Run with the many, who believe that God
Hath brought us hither to possess the land,
To our fore-fathers promis'd: on this faith
My reason and religion both are built:
I am not of your councils; if I err
Correct me of my error—When I note
The ardour of our warriors, and have seen
What mighty things their courage can effect,

When led by Joshua, I'm dispos'd to hope
That they, who over Amalek prevail'd,
Back'd by the pray'rs of Moses, will not shrink
In battle from the Edomites—But here,
If I am too presumptuous, if I think
Too well of our brave army, you perhaps,
Who know it better, may esteem it less:
I am myself no warrior, as ye see,
Yet those, who are, have told me that delays
Ofttimes create those dangers, which the hand
Of vigilance fore-arm'd had turn'd aside.
Therefore my judgment is with them, who hold
That we should take the vantage of the time,
And rather meet an unprepared foe,
Than prodigally sacrifice our chance
To their convenience, and exhaust our powers,
While they replenish theirs. I firmly thought,
When God had brought us forth from Goshen's land,
He meant to make us free; if so, methinks
To over-rule our choice is in effect

To rob us of our freedom, and defeat
God's gracious purpose. Oh! if I must lose
The liberty of mind, let me endure
Egyptian bondage, make me Pharaoh's slave:
For as the conscious spirit of a man
Transcends in dignity this garb of flesh,
So does the tyranny, that robs my soul
Of that divine intelligence, which Heav'n
Created free as air, afflict me more
Than those oppressive burdens, that at most
Give but corporeal pain."—Here as his voice
Swell'd to a louder tone, he turn'd a look
Upon the crowd, expecting to receive
The flattering tribute of their loud acclaim;
Silent they stood, and with averted eyes
Mark'd their contempt: he saw the scene how chang'd,
How fleeting was the triumph of his hope,
And in his declamation's mid career
Abasht, perceiv'd his cause already lost.
As the convicted felon, who in sleep

Dreams of escaping from the law's pursuit,
Awakes with double horror, whilst the moon
Shews through the prison-bars his dreary cell,
And dreadful recollection sets in view
The sword of justice waving o'er his head:
Such were the pangs that factious Korah felt,
When, deeming to have touch'd the master-string,
That would have drawn all hearts into a league
And full accordance with his trait'rous plot,
He found himself abandon'd and renounc'd;
A solitude around him: then his mind,
Of late so pregnant, instantly became
Sterile and waste; his tongue, by fear congeal'd,
Had lost the power of speech; but when the eye
Of Moses glanc'd upon him, soul-subdu'd,
Self-sentenc'd, and with blackest thoughts possest,
Desp'rate he turn'd to flight, and sought to hide
His horrors in the desart's deepest gloom.
" Elders and chiefs of Israel, Moses cried,
Lo, where Sedition's advocate is fled!

Do ye not blush, ye Levites, to behold
The son of Izhar so disgrace his stock?
Well would it be for him, if this defeat
Of his malicious hopes might be the sum
Of his atonement—But 'twere time methinks
That we resume our council, and dismiss
These rash misguided people to their tents:
That task, renown'd Elishama, be yours!
Your voice they'll hear, your person they'll respect."—
He said; the warrior instantly obey'd;
To every duty prompt, no need had he
Of further bidding—Haggard were his looks,
And ghastly pale with copious spilth of blood;
Him when the crowd beheld, and trembling heard
His clanking armour, onward as he strode,
And shook his threat'ning spear, backward they reel'd
Confounded and abash'd—" Go, get ye hence;
Fly to your tents, he cried, and hide your heads,
Ye loud but empty brawlers! Must we learn
Wisdom from you? Or is it you, alone,

That feel for Israel's glory? Are we slack,
And do we need your spur to prick us on?
Is it to victory that you would be led?
Beware you flag not ere you mount those hills,
For there it harbours, there the noble game
Will hold you to the chace. If blood ye want,
If wounds ye wish for, lo! I have to spare!
Till you shew furrows in your breasts like these,
I shall suspect you freer of your tongues
Than of your courage. You would beat to arms;
That is your mighty mandate, is it not?
Fine generals you would be, to sally forth
On a blind enterprize before you knew
One atom of the country you invade.
Away! and till ye're able to instruct
Your guardian prophet in the will of God,
And tutor Joshua in the art of war,
Let us not hear your clamour, and beware
How ye provoke the thunder of the Lord,
Or ye are lost for ever—Hence! begone"—

He said; they turn'd, and silently dispers'd;
Such virtue is there in a brave man's voice,
Such terror in his frown. Straight he return'd,
And thus to Moses, now in council, spake—
" Right holy seer, the tumult is appeas'd,
And what thou gav'st me in command is done.
The people will no longer interrupt
Your councils with their clamorous appeal.
I only gave them what they fairly earn'd,
Rough salutation in reproachful terms;
For eloquence ne'er touch'd my stubborn lips
With the soft unguent of persuasive words:
I simply sent them going, and they went."—
" Thy merits, gallant chief, replied the seer,
Owe not their lustre to a vain display
Of glittering words, but to the better proof
Of glorious actions and of zeal for God.
And now, ye princes, leaders of our tribes
And elders of our Israel, hear my words!
Ye see before you those high-tow'ring hills,

Beyond whose barrier lies your promis'd land:
Thither, did prudence warrant the attempt,
Unbidden we should march; we should not need
These chidings to arouse us, glad to quit
A station, that in nothing else excels,
But in varieties of care and pain.
What views have we, what purposes to serve
Distinct from those of all this murmuring host?
Can we derive advantage from the toils,
Which in this cheerless desart they sustain?
Are we not sharers in them? which of us
Feels not his equal portion of distress?
Doth drought less pang us, doth the fiery sun
Dart with less scorching energy on us
Than on the meanest follower of our camp?
Who then than us more eager to advance,
Did not imperious duty stay our march?
For we have liv'd sequester'd through the lapse
Of ages, pent in bondage, and cut off
From all acquaintance with the nations round

By the restrictive policy of those,
Who were our masters: nothing do we know,
Beyond th' horizon, which our eyes embrace,
Of those pre-destin'd regions; all is strange:
What camps, what barriers and what walled towns,
The nations, that inhabit them, may have
T' oppose our passage, we are still to learn:
Yet a vague rumour tells of wond'rous things,
Of armies countless, cities vast and strong,
Of Anakim, whose more than human bulk
And stature, strike beholders with dismay,
Invincible in arms: this I have heard,
But neither yield to terror, nor resign
Full credit to th' account: behoves us still
To pause upon the rumour, and devise
How to distinguish what is true from false.
Here then I stop; for who will teach us that?
Who of this princely circle will attempt
A task to awe the spirit of the bold,
Appal the cautious and perplex the wise?

As in my tent at midnight I repos'd,
That sacred voice, which spake from Sinai's brow,
With awful intonation smote mine ear—
'Moses, arise! it cried; to search the land,
Send forth a chosen band; from every tribe
Select some princely warrior, who may view,
And make report of your allotted seat.'—
So spake the voice divine. Where is the man,
The voluntary martyr of his tribe,
Who will adventure on this bold emprize?
I marvel not that ye are slow to court
Dangers, that set no glory to your view,
And sink the warrior from his lofty port
To the opprobrious office of a spy,
Ofttimes the prelude to a shameful death.
Yet so the Lord decrees, and I will hope
There are amongst us some, who, to His will
Obedient, will esteem no office mean,
No task a labour, and no death a shame."—
He ceas'd, when Joshua instantly arose,

And thus he spake—" Ye reverend elders all,
And chiefly thou, great prophet of the Lord,
From whom we learn His will, and hear His laws,
Let me not suffer in your noble minds
As one too arrogant, when I avow,
Greater ambition cannot fire my breast,
Than to be sharer in this glorious task;
And be the danger or the death my fate,
I shall embrace it as the earthly crown
Of all my labours, and lay down my life
With joyfulness, if so I may but mark
My love for Israel and my zeal for God.
Who my compeers shall be I venture not
To dictate to your wisdom: if from these
Here present you select them, to your choice
Nor I, nor any living, can object;
They must be worthy when approv'd by you:
Yet I must own, (and let me not despair
Of your indulgence) that I have a friend
Dear to my heart, the man, whom I would chuse

From the whole world to share my nearest thoughts,
Caleb, a son of Judah. If to me
Ye grant this high commission, grant to him
Like peril and like privilege to die,
If Heav'n shall so decree, for Israel's sake."—
He said; the elders rose with one accord
To honour their great chieftain, and affirm
Their general approbation of his zeal;
Nor did they less applaud his worthy choice
Of the brave son of Judah, justly priz'd
For his high fame in arms; and now all eyes
Were turn'd on Caleb; he with modest grace
And due obeisance rising from his seat,
Took from his head the sable-plumed casque,
And thus, uncover'd, spake—" I should be lost
To every manly feeling, every sense
Of gratitude or honour, did I fail,
(Though little worthy to engross the time
Of this assembly) to express my thanks
To that too partial friend, who calls me forth

To share his labours in the patriot cause,
To which I trust all present will believe
I am most ready to devote my life.
Yes, holy sage, I live but to obey
Thy voice, which speaks the mandates of the Lord,
Who is the God of Israel; and if he,
Whose brave achievements in Rephidim's field
Will stand recorded in th' immortal page
Of Israel's annals, deigns for me to breathe
A wish, and grace me with the name of friend;
If in the dangers, that await his search
Beyond those hostile mountains, Joshua thinks
That I will not desert him, or abuse
The honour of his choice, I do implore
Your gracious approbation of that choice;
So will I prove, that, when he call'd me friend,
He spoke me truly, and selected forth
One, whose supreme ambition is to live
A witness of his glory, or to fall
Dead by his side—Be this memorial mine,

That I was Joshua's friend—I ask no more."—
The hero ceas'd, and in th' approving smile
Of the meek prophet felt a purer praise,
Than the loud roar of thousands could bestow.
Joy sate on every face: it was a scene,
Where envy seem'd for once to have no part,
And whisper'd praises round the circle ran.
Whereat Elishama, of Ephraim chief,
Uprose, and thus the veteran warrior spake—
" With due submission to our council's guide,
Whose word, by wisdom sanction'd and by Heav'n,
Is, and for ever ought to be, our law,
I should conceive, when these illustrious chiefs,
By whom great Amalek and Omar fell,
Enroll their honour'd names, the list is full;
For who is there amongst us, that will shrink
From toils, which Joshua and which Caleb share?
When in the battle, fainting with my wounds,
Nor sight, nor strength were left me, then it was
Caleb receiv'd the javelin on his shield,

That had for ever clos'd these eyes in death:
When in the tent with Joshua I was laid,
And the last sigh was quivering on my lips,
The generous hero saw my piteous state,
And interceded with the holy seer,
That I might also live—The healing breeze
Pervaded my sick heart, and Heav'n's blest light
Once more revisited my closing eyes:
Thus in the power of Moses I survive
To do him service and obey his word;
And as my heart is with these patriot chiefs,
Who to this hardy enterprize are pledg'd,
So, under favour, I would fain devote
All that is left of this war-batter'd trunk
To them and to their cause."—Here as he bent
His eyes on Moses, he perceiv'd the seer
With interdicting hand had giv'n the sign,
That warn'd him to desist from further suit;
At sight whereof the warrior check'd his speech,
And in respectful silence paus'd to hear

What the presiding wisdom might decree:
Nor long he paus'd, when, rising from his seat,
Thus with a smile benignant Moses spake—
" Elishama, though I, and all, must praise
Your generous zeal, yet for the common good
Of Israel, and your own especial tribe,
We must conjure you to remain with us,
And spare the remnant of a life, which God
In His prospective mercy, when all hope
Was lost, for other duties hath reserv'd.
The toilsome journey, which those friends must take,
Who shall go forth to search the destin'd land,
Is not for you, whose wounds, as yet unheal'd,
Would but retard their progress through the maze
Of distant regions, hostile and unknown.
And now although I see before me chiefs
Of every tribe, yet will I not offend
So many worthy by selecting one:
Him, whom his tribe shall chuse, I will approve.
When princely Joshua quits the high command,

Which without honour's loss he had retain'd,
And, with his gallant comrade, nobly braves
This arduous enterprize, on which depends
The fate of future armies, can I doubt
If other tribes will scruple to present
Their choicest warriors to assist the search,
And share the toils, of heroes so renown'd ?
No—With to-morrow's dawn I shall expect
To see the whole appointed twelve complete:
Then, what the Lord may dictate, all shall hear,
And blessed they shall be, who, through the course
Of their important duty, shall perform
In faithfulness and truth what God ordains."—
He said, and, to his tent retiring, left
The council to appoint their several chiefs.
Forthwith from elder REUBEN they elect
Shammua, the son of Zaccur; from the tribe
Of SIMEON, Shaphat; whilst the general vote
Of ISSACHAR gives Igal to the list:
Palti, the son of Raphu, by the choice

Of BENJAMIN appointed of the twelve;
And Gaddiel, by the princes of the tribe
Of ZEBULUN elect; with Ammiel, son
Of sage Gemalli, whom the chiefs of DAN
Call to the bold adventure, pledge their names:
MANASSEH's warlike captains give their voice
For Gaddi; ASHER's nobles to the list
Present the name of Sethur, nor do these,
So honour'd, shrink from the important charge:
The princely chiefs of NAPHTALI bestow
Their suffrages on Nahbi; when at length
Geuel, by GAD's concurrent choice enroll'd
Participant, completes the chosen band.
This done, the ten with Caleb, JUDAH's son,
And Joshua, EPHRAIM's and the army's chief,
Unite their hands and pledge their mutual troth—
Alas! had these been faithful to their trust,
What mis'ries might not Israel have escap'd!
  Their duty thus perform'd, the council rose;
When Joshua, as with Caleb by his side

Tow'rds Judah's van he took his pensive way,
Thus to his friend unbosom'd his sad thoughts—
" Whether it be the error of my mind,
Or that some heavy melancholy weigh
On my late weaken'd frame, I cannot tell;
But so it is: in vain I strive to chase
These ominous impressions, that persist
To haunt me with suspicions and alarms,
So foreign to my nature, so unfair
To our elected brethren, and so false,
As in all honour I must hope they are.
But these forebodings master all the strength,
That I can summon to my reason's aid.
To thee my thoughts are open as to Heav'n;
On thee, my friend, my confidence is fix'd;
The stay of all my hope thou art; but why,
Why glance these evil auspices on them,
And wherefore is it my repugnant heart
Can harmonize with none but thee alone?
Why did not Moses name the chosen ten?

Shall I confess to thee, there was not one
From Shammua, the elect of Reuben, down
To the last chosen by the sons of Gad,
That did not chill me, as I took his hand
In token of affiance? Some I know
Slight and unsteady men; others I doubt.
None of the chosen ten had found his name
In that enrolment, had the choice been mine;
Had it been Korah's, all."—He said, and paus'd,
When Caleb thus—"I own my heedless thought
Took slight account of any, whom the chiefs
Of the electing tribes have singled out
To spare themselves the task and fill the list.
False brethren they may prove; but this I know,
A faithful servant you shall find in me.
Our wise and holy prophet is not apt
To leave his work unfinisht, and I saw,
When he withdrew from council, that on you
He rested this adventure, well appris'd
That Heav'n would crown your labours with success:

Therefore indifferent I reach'd forth to them
My hand, but kept my heart entire for you."—
" Talk ever to me thus, the chief replied;
And when I yield to weakness, only set
The mercies of my God before my eyes,
And my sick mind shall be restor'd to health.
Within this bosom there is lodg'd a heart,
That knows no fear, when duty calls me forth
Or for my friend, my country or my God:
But it is made, as heart of man must be,
Weak and susceptible of human ills;
And when I see rebellion rear its front,
And envious Korah drive the madd'ning crowd
To rise against all order, and insult
God's chosen servant, then it is, I feel
Infirm with passion; then my bosom's lord
Becomes my reason's tyrant. When the roar
Burst on my ear, indignant to be brav'd
By those, whom I commanded, I drew forth
My sword, and, but that Moses staid my hand,

Had rush'd infuriate on the clam'rous throng:
When Korah spake, again my anger rose,
Again the patient prophet interpos'd,
And I was silent, but my stifled rage,
Though seeming dead, had fuel for more flames.
And hence it is, that as the slightest wound
Grows foul and ulcerous when the blood's diseas'd,
So in the mind's infirmity we view
Through a false medium of discolour'd light
The actions and the characters of men;
And even thus perchance I may have wrong'd
These worthy chiefs, elected of our band,
Friends to our cause and partners in our toil."—
" It may be so, the youthful warrior cried,
Time, which tries all men's courage, will try their's,
And when their ore hath sev'n times pass'd the fire,
Proof and experience will decide its worth:
But see! the night hath stol'n upon our talk,
And we are summon'd by to-morrow's dawn
To our new enterprize—Fair hours befal

My best of friends, and calm repose the whilst."—
Dark o'er the desart fell the shades of night,
And thick'ning vapours shrouded the pale stars,
When Korah, wand'ring wild, like one distraught,
Or him that walks in sleep, with felon step
Had pass'd the sandy waste, and now, immers'd
In deeper shade, he found his path beset
With crags and tangling bushes intermixt;
For at the mountain's base he had arriv'd.
Here, in a solitude, whose gloom inspir'd
Horrors congenial with his desperate thoughts,
He stopp'd, and stood; then, as the swelling tide
Of recollection rush'd upon his mind,
Thus, mingling groans with words, and tears with rage,
The dire effusions of his soul burst forth.
" Why did the Maker call me into life?
Why waste His workmanship upon my clay,
And store it with perceptions, senses, thoughts
And understanding, for no other use
But to sum up my mis'ry's vast amount?

When he makes wretched, why not make me base,
Dull and irrational? Ah, why erect
This tyranny of conscience in my heart,
Which to avoid, to these unhallow'd rocks,
That never echo'd God's tremendous name,
Madd'ning I fly, and call the dæmons up
To wrap me in such horrors, as may blast
The eye, that does but glance upon my shame?
The Good Pow'r casts me from him; whither now,
But to the evil shall a wretch resort?
Whom shall I call? No more of Egypt's gods!
With them there is no refuge, no support;
They have been tried; their feeble aid has fail'd.
Esau was high in honour and renown:
When Jacob's race were slaves, he dealt out crowns
And kingdoms to his sons: Esau had gods,
Though not of Abram's choice; and though the sword
Hath glanc'd on Amalek, still Chemos reigns
O'er the unconquer'd nations of the south.
If then thou art a god, and hast an ear,

Chemos, thou God of Esau, list to me!
I ask not death, for that I can command,
And death brings no revenge: I court thee not
For aught this world can give, and only wish
These Abramites to feel what Korah feels,
Shame, disappointment, phrensy and despair.
Let them like me go forth, like me invoke
Thee from thy central cavern to arise,
And meet them in this desolated waste;
Then, if thou hast the virtue of a fiend,
Turn their vain pray'r to mock'ry, and insult
Their vile apostacy, as dæmon should."—
Thus as he rav'd blaspheming he perceiv'd
A vaporous light of pale and livid hue,
Descending from the mountain, till at length,
Alighting on his path, it led him on
To a rude altar, chissel'd from the rock,
And, resting there, discover'd to his view
This writing, deep engrav'd upon the stone—
" To Chemos, lord and light of all the earth,

Esau, when journeying from Beer-sheba, built
This altar. Hither let the wretched fly,
Approach and be at peace! So Chemos wills."—
  Pondering the wond'rous legend Korah stood,
When from behind the altar there arose
What seem'd a cloud, but more than cloud condense,
Though insubstantial, formless, undefin'd;
Trembling he gaz'd, and whilst he gaz'd, behold!
The pillar'd mist dissolving took the shape
And human features of an ancient man,
White bearded to the girdle: tall it stood,
And o'er its mantled shoulders seem'd to wear
A lion's shagged hide; whilst as it rose,
The flame, that heretofore had faintly play'd
About the altar, brighten'd and became
Intense and fiery red—Rooted with fear,
Depriv'd of speech and motion, Korah stood,
And thus at length the ghastly vision spake."—
  " Son of Affliction, what thou readest there,
If rightly thou interpretest the text,

And dost believe in that transcendant power,
Who offers thee this comfort, be thy grief
Deep as it may, however great thy sin,
Trusting in Chemos, from the galling yoke
Of a vext conscience thou shalt be releas'd,
And what thy heart desires, thy hand shall reach."—
To him the Levite thus essay'd to speak—
"If Chemos can do this"—"If he can do!
What can he not, the angry vision cried?
I am his minister; I know his power,
And in my thought can trace him through the span
Of that vast circle, which he daily fills,
When in his fiery car he belts the globe,
And with the bright infusion of his beams
Renders transparent every secret thought,
That harbours in the gloomy hearts of men.
Approach no nearer; stretch not forth thy hand
To touch me, lest it wither and fall off.
Thou art of earthly matter; I of air,
Untainted by mortality; for I

Of Chemos am the messenger for good
To those he favours, and, from death exempt,
Am, like the master spirit whom I serve,
Of essence incorporeal. Thee I know,
Korah, the son of Levi, and of kin
To Moses, execrable name, accurst
By every spirit of earth, air or fire;
Still, by the deadly hatred, which thou bear'st
To that abhorr'd magician; by thy zeal
For Amalek, whom Moses with his spells
And incantations treacherously robb'd
Of victory and life; by proofs like these
Of a true temper, such as Chemos loves,
Thou hast aton'd for nation and for name,
And by his favour shalt enjoy revenge,
Vast as thine appetite can entertain,
Though thine unsated hunger should increase
By what it feeds on—Therefore kneel and swear
To Chemos."—"Kneel! the shrinking traitor, cried;
To Chemos would'st thou have me kneel, and swear

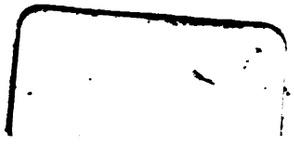
To a strange God? Mine I have seen in fire,
Heard Him in thunder, felt the firm earth quake,
Whilst He descended on the burning mount,
That like a furnace smok'd."—Thus as he spake,
The dæmon trembled, and his face became
Ghastly with rage. Again the caitiff cried—
" Thy god I mock not, but I dread my own;
Mine is a jealous God: I know not thine.
Will he make dry the sea to let me pass,
Feed me with bread from Heav'n, and from the rock
Draw welling waters to allay my thirst?
Shew me thy Chemos; manifest his power;
Let Chemos give me my revenge, and break
The wizzard rod of Moses; that will pay
The purchase of my faith—and I will kneel."—
" Dost thou capitulate? Then art thou lost"—
Thus said the fiend within himself, unheard
Of Korah, whilst with venom, like the toad's,
His heaving breast expanded, and his eyes
Glar'd horribly within their sunken cells:

Red rose the flame afresh, that at the name
Of God had sunk, and pal'd its angry hue—
" Thou shalt be satisfied, the tempter cried:
No conquest shall the sons of Jacob gain;
This altar stands the bound'ry of their march:
The god of Amalek defies their power;
Edom and Anak mock their vain attempt:
The vultures of the desart shall devour,
The pestilence shall smite them; from the throne
Of my bright god consuming fires shall fall:
The soul of their diviner shall be sick;
Years upon years shall roll, and in the dust
His hoary head shall sink and he shall die;
But never shall his foot o'erstep the bounds
Of Canaan's land, and they, whose faith is built
On promises, shall find they built on air.
Doubt not; believe! for what I speak is fate."—
" Enough! the traitor cried; if Moses drink
Of disappointment's bitter draught, and die,
It is enough: my vengeance is complete;

But, say, shall Joshua live?"—" Enquire no more,
The dæmon said: twelve spies are going forth;
Of these is Joshua one; but ten are mine:
Ignoble office this for Israel's chief;
But thus your master dignifies his friends.
To-morrow they depart; mark the event:
Doubt not but I'll be near, where'er they go;
They may be Canaan's spies, but I'll be their's.
They shall return, but it will be a day
Of bitterness to him, that is thy foe;
Heavy shall be the yoke, that Moses bears,
And sorely shall it wring him, when they speak
The words, that I will put into their hearts:
Rebellion then shall spread through all the camp,
And thou shalt triumph. Only wait the time,
Conciliate Chemos, and revenge is thine."
The dæmon ceas'd, when thus th' apostate wretch,
Son of perdition, spake—" Whate'er thou art,
Spirit of air or earth, so great the joy,
Thy tidings minister to my sad heart,

That I will call thee gracious, and believe,
That what thou hast auspiciously announc'd
Shall be accomplish'd truly: in which faith
Before this altar, low as to its foot,
I bow my suppliant body, and devote
My heart and its best functions to the power,
Whose minister thou art, and from henceforth
Whose servant in all duty I will be."—
" 'Tis well! the dæmon cried; thou art mine own;
And, as the night now deepens on the waste,
And thou hast far to travel, to thy tent
Swiftly I'll waft thee on the moment's wing,
As in a dream."—This said, by magic spell
He caught the soul-surrender'd caitiff up,
And laid him on his couch, unseen of all.
Here in perturbed sleep th' apostate lay,
Haunted by frightful dreams, till with the dawn
Waking he started, and aloud exclaim'd—
" God of my fathers, save me!"—for just then
His agonizing conscience had pourtray'd

The furious dæmon in the act to seize
And drag him to a hideous pit, that yawn'd
Unfathomable, wrapt in sulph'rous flames.
Cold sweat bedew'd his limbs, distortion wrung
His palsied visage, and with fit so strong
The dread phantasma had convuls'd his frame,
The couch beneath him shook. Around he cast
A look of wild distraction: one dim lamp
Beside him hung, and shed a dying light,
Than darkness-self more gloomy—"Oh my God!—
Confus'd and muttering to himself, he cried,
How came I hither? and where have I been?
Is my mind perfect? Do I see my tent?
Hark! 'tis my wife that speaks; I hear her voice.
It is a dream; it is my feverish brain,
That wander'd to the wilderness; not I,
Not I have knelt to Chemos; I have seen
No altar, bargain'd with no ghostly shape,
That prophecied of vengeance; I have made
No vows to idols, never spake those words."—

" Say'st thou, a voice replied ? Hear them from me!
For they are register'd by that dread power,
To whom thy soul is pledg'd."—Down on his couch,
Down sunk the conscience-stricken wretch, abash'd,
Confounded, whilst the voice aloud rehears'd
This dreadful repetition in his ears—
" Before this altar low as to its foot
" I bow my suppliant body, and devote
" My heart and its best functions to the power,
" Whose minister thou art, and from henceforth
" Whose servant in all duty I will be."

END OF THE FOURTH BOOK.